Chapter 3

Women’s Employment in the Angami and Chakhesang Traditions

The second chapter was a detailed background of the Angami and Chakhesang communities, their social organization, traditional practices and functions. The analysis shows that their societies are patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal and how these societies function through patriarchal principles and still retain these practices in modern times. The present chapter is a continuation of that analysis. It examines the traditional practices of the Angami and Chakhesang women in the past. The assumption that tribal women are treated as equals and are given higher status than in other non-tribal societies is analysed by seeing whether the traditional practices have undergone any alterations. The chapter also asks whether the traditional practices have aggravated the unemployment problem of the tribal women of the Angami and Chakhesang communities. It is known that in the traditional society both men and women were equally engaged in agriculture and that women were the decision makers in agricultural activities. It is, therefore, doubtful whether even the concept of women’s unemployment existed. To clarify this in detail it is of utmost importance to study the status of women in the Angami and Chakhesang societies.

3.1 Traditional Practices of Angami and Chakhesang Women

As there are cultural differences in every village and in every clan within the same tribe, a careful study of the lives of women becomes important as some of the social norms and practices that affect them today have their roots in the past. This section begins by examining the traditional role and the customary practices on the lives of the Angami and Chakhesang women.
3.1.1 Family, Societal and Economic Role

In the ‘traditional’ society, Angami and Chakhesang women were confined to the four walls of their homes. They were not allowed to mix freely with the ‘outsiders’\(^1\). In the Angami tradition women were expected to maintain certain social norms in and outside the family. Chase Roy (2004: 33) mentions that women maintained a strong sense of *mhosho*\(^2\), that was carried over to every aspect of life be it work, domestic chores, community activities or women’s personal bearing. In the Chakhesang tradition, women too were expected to be morally good, polite, smart, and skilled in handicrafts.

The traditional role assigned to Angami and Chakhesang women was limited to the domestic sphere. There were three types of roles within the domestic spheres (D’Souza, Christina, Veronica 2002).

i) Roles performed only by men such as hunting, fishing etc,

ii) Roles performed only by women such as weaving, sowing etc and

iii) Roles performed by both men and women such as cooking, fetching water related to household chores.

Men rarely did the household work that was considered as women’s work. However at the time of sickness or pregnancy the male member of the house helped the women but in normal situations, men did not involve in household works because he was looked down up on by the community if he was found cooking or washing or remained at home without involving in the societal matters. So much so, it was women who primarily maneuvered to run the family forward. The Angami and Chakhesang traditions clearly lay down the role of women for ‘household chores, preparing and serving food, socializing the young ones and cultivation’\(^3\).

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1 ‘Traditional’ here refers to the past. Outsiders’ here refers to non-nagas who were mostly engaged in business.
2 *Mhosho* is an Angami term that is equivalent to pride and prestige.
3 Household chores includes washing, cleaning utensils, looking after the sick, cleaning the house and surroundings, weaving, child care such as feeding and nursing. Preparing and serving food such as bringing water, pounding and winnowing food grains, cooking and serving food and preparing rice beer. Socializing the young ones such as teaching the traditional practices, what is to be done, how girls should behave etc. It allows the mother to transmit the knowledge of the ancestors to the young ones. Cultivation such as clearing the jhum fields, sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, storing food grains, gathering edible roots and leaves, bringing firewood, looking after the kitchen, gardening, and looking after domestic animals.
The traditional role of both the tribal women was to bear children which implied that marriage was a natural choice. In both the societies, the first and foremost duty of a woman was to look after the household activities and to bring up the children. In the past, these social roles were so strictly followed that if there was any misfortunes in the family or the children lagged behind ‘others’ in their growth and development, the women in the family were blamed. Certain norms were laid down for their behaviour while mingling with ‘others’ after marriage. On the contrary, there were women who remained unmarried and single but they were ‘taunted’ and were also considered a burden to the entire family. This does not mean that she was not welcomed in both the tribes.

The birth of a girl child endowed a woman with natural respect and welcome by the society since she ensured the continuation of the tribe through child bearing and rearing process. However, differences exist with regard to the birth of a male and female child. Because of the patriarchal structure, usually the birth of a male child was welcomed by special or grand feasts and celebrations. The social organisation of the Angami and Chakhesang society laid down norms for the total control over the women’s rights. Although also the birth of a girl was welcomed, it was necessary to have a son. That made the family large. Hence, the birth of a girl child was mainly welcomed due to child bearing and rearing process that became her first priority.

After marriage, Angami and Chakhesang women assumed a responsible position and the right to live in her husband’s house. She become the sole manager to take care of her husband’s property, cultivate land, gather and store grains, sells the surplus and decide what animals to rear. If a woman becomes a widow, she could continue to stay in her husband’s house provided she had children. In case of the Angamis if the husband’s

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4 ‘Others’ here refers to members of the communities and other communities.
5 ‘Others’ here refers especially to any men apart from her husband and family members.
6 Consider ‘taunted’ in the passage as a subject of discussion by others and not to the extremeness of being challenged or being avoided by others.
7 Social organisation (patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal) follows that married women left natal home and lived in their husband’s house and children traced their lineage, descent and surname from their father and authority is exercised by the father.
family coveted all that belonged to her, she could return to her parents home for better care and protection (Christina 2002: 190). Also in the Chakhesang tradition, a widow could inherit the property on the death of her husband. A divorcee could also claim the property if the reason of separation was the husband’s infidelity the property was equally divided between the husband and wife. And if divorce was due to the wife’s infidelity, she had to leave the husband’s house with just a lungi\(^8\) and a shawl (Zehol K and Zehol L 1988: 73-74; Kelhou 1988:57).

With regard to property ownership, in both the Angami and Chakhesang societies, the property owned by the village or clan belongs to all the members of the lineage. Only the male members of the family could inherit the ancestral ‘immovable properties’\(^9\) which were specified as individual and common. Both son and daughters could inherit ‘movable properties’\(^10\). The inheritance rule varies from village to village. The question of women’s inheritance on ancestral property in the absence of male child depends on the willingness of the parents and the communities. As Hutton (1969: 135) puts it:

“…all customary inheritance can admittedly be modified at will by the verbal directions of the bequeathed, and a verbal bequest to a stranger would be admitted as valid and would probably under ordinary circumstances be respected…”

However, the general principle is the same for every village i.e, only male members inherit the ancestral property. Though, women too can inherit the ancestral property in the absence of a male child in the family.\(^11\) Women usually receive the ancestral property after transferring a piece of land, household articles to the immediate male kin. On receiving her share, she can even build her house, cultivate, sell the produce and occupy the ancestral property along with her husband. However, it is to be noted that such share of the ancestral property to female is rarely practiced and that only during her life time after her death it reverse to her male kins. Thus, it means that the daughter does

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\(^{8}\) Lungi or skirts wore by the Angami and Chakhesang women as an undergarment.

\(^{9}\) An immovable property includes the forest, water channels and arable land.

\(^{10}\) A movable property includes looms, ornaments, food grains, agricultural implements, livestock and clothes depending on who uses them.

\(^{11}\) But such practice is possible if the males or the communities do not have a male issue. For more information on Angami and Chakhesang female property rights (See Christina 2002:183-192; Zehol K and Zehol L 1988: 63-76)
not have the right of ownership on the ancestral property but only the right of use (Christina 2002: 189).

The property that a woman inherited depends on the types of property she received and owned. Apart from the ancestral property, parents can also gift their daughters both moveable and immovable property in marriage known as *Pozephü*\(^{12}\) among the Angamis and *Lüna*\(^{13}\) among the Chakhesangs that becomes her absolute property. The *Pozephü or Lüna* is transmitted from mother to daughter. If there were no daughters in the family line, the *Pozephü or lüna* would revert to the reversionary\(^{14}\). The reversionary receives the payment only once in her lifetime. Women can also buy land on her own and has the absolute rights over her personal belongings. However, in most cases men have monopoly over such individual property by virtue of the right of inheritance. If a woman dies after her re-marriage and did not give any verbal directions on her property, the land bequeathed from her parents or owned by her during her lifetime reverts to the nearest male of her deceased husband’s family (Hutton 1969: 73-74).

With regard to decision making, in the Angami and Chakhesang society, the customary law stood against decision making process in the political, religious and administrative affairs. Though the Angami political organisation was democratic in nature, patriarchal dominance was visible as women were not allowed to participate in the decision making process, nor chosen as elders or chiefs. They were totally excluded even from the meetings meant to select the chief or leaders. Chakhesang women were also not encouraged to participate in political, administrative or religious activities as those activities were considered to be the “domain of men” (Vitso 2003: 59). It means that women’s participation in the decision making process did not exist nor were they chosen as elders or chiefs. They had totally no say in the administrative, religious and administrative affairs.

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\(^{12}\) Among the southern Angami (Zuono-Keyhnuo group) the female inherited land ‘Pozephü’ known as mother’s field is gifted to the eldest daughter in marriage. It is the land owned by the parents and not the ancestral property.

\(^{13}\) *Lüna* is the gift given by the Chakhesang parents to their daughters in marriage. It is the land owned by the parents and not the ancestral property.

\(^{14}\) Reversionary refers to any female members like aunt, cousins etc. of the women’s family. It is important to note that reversionary receives the share only in the absence of girl child in the family.
political affairs but had the full freedom to make decisions at home and matters related to agricultural activity. However women’s freedom at home or in making decisions at home was not binding as it all depended on the willingness of their parents or husband.

Apart from their family roles, women did shared societal roles in the past. Their societal role was to perform all the agricultural rituals for the community. Among the Angami women, their roles as Liedepfü, Tsakro and Tekhusekhrüpfü are signs of societal roles (Vitso 2003: 35). Though there were no written laws or set patterns, the Tsana was passed on through words and practices. It was the women who mediate the tsana to the community. The Chakhesang women too acted as Demi and Mawopi, in the past. They played a significant role during festivals and in the rituals performed on various occasions.

The traditional society clearly designates the economic roles of men and women. Men were engaged in hunting and warfare; women were engaged in agriculture and domestic activities. The Angami and Chakhesang societies considered land as the centre of their life and a sacred inheritance. Land was the mark of riches and status. Those who owned land also had power, prestige, and importance. Barter system existed in both the societies in the past. Economic role involves women’s participation beyond their household premises that was unseen in the past. Thus, we see that women’s societal role was closely related to their economic role. The traditional economic activities were based on agriculture and women performed all the rituals related to agriculture. She was believed to own Nyiepi-o so as to improve the family economy (Kikon 2002:176). All the agricultural rituals were to be performed at the proper time and taboos were maintained on activities like hunting, celebration of feasts, marriages, weaving etc. If women did not perform the agricultural rituals at the right time, there was a strong belief

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15 ‘Liedepfü (the First Reaper), Tsakro (the first sower) and Tekhusekhrüpfü (the First Planter) are Angami terms.
16 Tsana is an Angami term which refers to ‘the ways of the ancestors’.
17 Demi refers to mediator and Mawopi refers to village priestess. Both these terms are used by the Chakhesang.
18 For more information, (See Zehol K and Zehol L 1988).
19 Nyiepi-o is a Chakhesang term that refers to spirit associated with wealth and riches.
that natural calamity such as: famine, drought, hailstorm etc. would befall the entire village (Vitso 2003: 70).

From the above discussion on the traditional role of Angami and Chakhesang women, we see that in the traditional days, marriage for the Angami and Chakhesang woman was important to bear children for continuing their culture, for retaining pride and prestige, to escape from shaving their head, for protection and security and to avoid gossips and mockery for remaining single. With regard to decision making, women had no say in the religious, administrative and political affairs nor appointed as chiefs or head in the village. Women were equal partners in all the domestic matters but took decisions only in consultation with their husband. Women assumed the role of a hostess, mediator and village priestess yet, she was held responsible if there was a quarrel in the family. Though the societal and economic roles were assigned to women in the religious activities and functions, it was the priest who actually performed all the religious functions and animal sacrifices. Hence, the actual authority to decide on matters of importance was vested in the priest who was always a man. One can see that even women’s recognized roles were circumscribed by patriarchal norms. That is to say, the traditional Angami and Chakhesang women were relegated to secondary positions.

3.1.2 Customary Laws: Taboos or Gennas

In both the Angami and Chakhesang societies, the customary law accorded fixed roles to women. Though, the Angami and Chakhesang customary laws are unwritten, the intrinsic values that are associated to their customs are deeply rooted in their tradition that operates as a stabilizing factor and a binding force for the communities. As Vitso (2003: 5) says, that customary law governs the entire life spectrum of an individual from conception to death. It includes the dos and don’ts; taboos, social rituals, cultural practices, involvement of the elders, public opinion, ethical codes and manners.

20 ‘Hostess’ refers to entertaining the guest who comes to their house.
21 Customary Law contains as a set of rules that attain the force of law because a society observes them continuously and uniformly for a long time.
Both the Angami and Chakhesang accord great importance to their customary law, as it was believed that these laws were sanctioned by the ‘supernatural being’\textsuperscript{22} and so it was mandatory for the members to follow. As the customary law embodied spiritual significance, in respect and for the fear of punishment from the divine being the customary law was strictly followed by the Angami and Chakhesang communities. Bhattacharjee (1990:102-116) mentions that, some of the violations of the Angami customary laws were tolerated with no sanction and was left to the spirit to take care of them. The customary law and its strict implications on women were maintained by enforcing \textit{taboos} or restriction on women.

The Angami and Chakhesang communities imposed various \textit{taboos}\textsuperscript{23} on women inorder to protect them from defilement. Traditionally, \textit{taboo}s entrust the women to perform sacred rituals for the family, community and village. \textit{Taboo}s on women were based on the concept of purity or sacredness and protection. Women’s shaven head in the past is a clear indication of the significance of taboo{s} in the lives of the Angami and Chakhesang communities.\textsuperscript{24} In the past, several \textit{taboos} or \textit{gennas} were performed by men and women separately and by both. Though both Angami and Chakhesang women observed certain \textit{taboos} on women, the way in which it was done, i.e., time, season and importance, differed from village to village and from clan to clan. Some of the \textit{taboos} related to women are discussed below.

\textit{Taboos} on agricultural activity for the Angamis and Chakhesangs, was observed during \textit{Sekrenyi} or \textit{Phousanyi} and \textit{Sükrii} and \textit{Tsükhenye}\textsuperscript{25} festivals where the men or husband took ceremonial bath, cooked food, dine together with other men and spent their time in the \textit{Tehuba} or \textit{Khrozhü} while the women were not allowed to be with their

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Supernatural being is the belief in divine spirit usually associated to the tribal religion ‘Animism’.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Taboo}s or \textit{Genna}s refers to restrictions on the communities made by customary law.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} About the \textit{taboos} or \textit{Genna}s, Vitso (2003: 31) says, “Strict observance of genna or menyi was absolutely necessary for health, wealth and progress of an individual and the community. Violations of genna or menyi observation resulted in being ostracised from the village for a particular period of time and also had to face the wrath of the supernatural being or romi in the form of disease or sickness or natural calamity for the whole village or only for the guilty individual. The fear of facing the wrath of the unseen supernatural being or romi greatly helped in the proper functioning of the traditional customary law in almost every part of life.”
  \item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Sekrenyi} or \textit{Phousanyi} is an Angami festival or celebration for men at the beginning of the sowing season. \textit{Sükrii} and \textit{Tsükhenye’} is a Chakhesang festival for both the men and women at the beginning of the sowing season.
\end{itemize}
husband during this festival. It was believed that such taboos will invoke the blessing of the spirits for a bountiful harvest. These agricultural festivals are not merely meant for celebrations but also have religious significance. Another festival meant exclusively for the women is the *Khoupfhünyi* celebrated by the Angamis and *Thunonuoso* celebrated by the Chakhesang women for purification ceremony.

The role of the Angami and Chakhesang village priest i.e, *Zievo* and *Mawo* was very important in performing sacred agricultural rituals. Gennas associated to agriculture was performed mostly by women as announced by the *Zievo* and *Mawo*. Angami Rituals such as *Kizie* (a ritual performed to dedicate a new house), *Mekhru zie* (an annual ceremony performed in remembrance of the death of relatives), *Tsiakrü* (a ritual performed at the starting of the harvest), and *Kikenyü* (a ritual performed for sanctifying the harvest) was done by women. And Chakhesang rituals such as: *Thinikechü khrü* (a ritual performed before sowing of seed) and *Ba menyi* was done by women for good harvest. Another gennas observed by the Angami and Chakhesang women was associated with the hunting season. It was a taboo for a woman to weave and touch the bed sheets of the men going for hunting or fetch water from the ponds which were used by the men, eat the meat of certain animals and birds or certain portion of the meat brought by the man for the fear of unsuccessful hunt. This genna continues until their men returns home after a successful hunt (Chase Roy 2004:7; Vitso 2003: 34-35). It was a taboo for a Chakhesang woman to tie her hair during an oath taking ceremony (Lohe 2011: 216). Christianity has changed many of these practices but still many follow these rituals.

As it was women’s duty to look after the domestic chores, certain food taboos were imposed on them. It was a taboo for women to eat the flesh of wild animals and

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26 It is to be noted that unlike the Angamis, on the third day known as ‘*Thuno nuso*’ of the Chakhesang’s during the *Sükrünye* and *Tsükhenye* festivals the women (mother) sanctify their young daughters by preparing and eating unblemished hen.

27 *Khoupfhünyi* is an Angami festivals meant for cleansing the female at the end of planting and harvest. This is done by eating cooked food from a different hearth away from the male members of the family. For more detail (See Chase Roy 2004:53-54).

28 *Thunonuoso* is a Chakhesang festival meant for sanctifying the young females. For more details (See Lanunungsang and Ovung 2012: 35-44).

29 *Ba menyi* - a ritual meant for purifying the hands of the Chakhesang women usually done on the eight day before sowing the seeds. It was restricted to burn in the kitchen hearth except the firewood on this day. Women who perform the rituals were not allowed to receive things from others (See Vitso 2003:34-38).
birds. The Angami women were not allowed to eat the flesh of monkeys, ram, wild beast and other animals living on trees, as it was believed that eating such meat would infuse women with the animal’s character (Chase Roy 2004: 68). The Chakhesang women were not allowed to eat the meat of eagles, squirrel and stags as it was believed that eagle’s meat would make women inherit the character of an eagle of eating all the food available thereby causing famine and that eating squirrels would make a woman nibble at food continuously. Eating stags would cause problems for women at childbirth. Chakhesang women were also not allowed to eat the food left over by guests. Also, Chakhesang men never ate the wild animals killed by women for the fear of losing battles or an unsuccessful hunt (Vitso 2003: 55-56).

Among the Angamis and Chakhesangs, women after childbirth, were kept at home for at least nine days for the Angamis and eight days for the Chakhesangs. During this period the husbands did all the domestic work and women were forbidden to touch certain weapons, tools and musical instruments during this period (Chase Roy 2004: 60; Vitso 2003:44). If an Angami woman died at child birth, it was a taboo for anybody except the priest (Zievo) to see or touch her body and the deceased was buried at the back of the house without any ceremony (Chase Roy 2004: 61). Among the Chakhesangs, death rituals differed from one case to another. For instance, if a dead woman had an earlier case of Lhepi, it was taboo for the children to see the dead body of the mother or even to touch any articles of the dead (Vitso 2003:44). In case of normal death among the Angami and Chakhesang women, the body was washed by the daughter, covered with a white cloth and laid on a mat surrounded by baskets of unhusked paddy and food stuffs like yam, maize etc buried in the family or clan land (Chase Roy 2004: 62; Vitso 2003:50).

There were also taboos on festivals observed by the Angami and Chakhesang communities for celebrations as well. For instance, among the Angamis, the Nuowü was celebrated and taboo was observed by keeping aside a day meant totally for celebration

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30 Lhepi is related to pain experience by women similar to labour pain usually after birth. The Chakhesang believed that violation of death rituals for those women who had Lhepi would bring early dead of the mother and child.
31 Nuowü is a festival of the Angamis associated to the birth of the first child.
on the birth of the first child. An Angami parents send pitchers of Zu\textsuperscript{32} and plate of cooked meat to their daughters as a sign of showing their happiness to the daughter’s new home. Another festival is the Khoupfhüni which are signs of celebrations. Among the Chakhesang too, there were festivals meant for women and the whole community. Rūnyie\textsuperscript{33} festival (both male and female drink Zuso\textsuperscript{34}, eat meat and sing folk songs) and Thunonuoso festivals are instances of such celebrations.

Thus, one can see that customary law imposed various restrictions or taboos on the Angami and Chakhesang women. The Angami and Chakhesang traditions and customs were based on myths and beliefs related to their tribal religion. Any violation of such practices was believed to bring misfortune hence penalties were meted out for them, in severe cases to the extent of being ostracized from their society. The overt purpose of maintaining taboos was to protect women and misfortunes visiting them. The traditional warfare and hunting culture made men dominant and superior to women. A patriarchal society developed from there and in its turn, it was strengthened by the customary laws. Though, Angami and Chakhesang women participated in some festivals along with their communities, they did enjoy the status that was ascribed to them. She had full control, authority and freedom over such positions. In short, she enjoyed full freedom and held high position within her own domain. Thus, patriarchy institutionalized by strict customary law resulted in the subordination of women in the past and weakening of their freedom of choice and decision making within the family and outside (Pienyü 2012:37).

### 3.2 Impact of British Rule on Angami and Chakhesang Women

Having given the traditional practices of both the Angami and Chakhesang women this section examine the impact of the British rule in the lives of the Angami and Chakhesang women focusing on Christianity (religion), education, social, political, administrative and economic role to see whether there is continuity or change on the traditional practices of the Angami and Chakhesang women.

\textsuperscript{32} Zu refers to Angami local rice beer.

\textsuperscript{33} Rūnyie, a Chakhesang festival usually celebrated by both males and females held just after the harvest for eighteen days.

\textsuperscript{34} Zuso refers to Chakhesang local rice beer.
3.2.1 Colonial and Post Colonial Period

The most remarkable impact of the British on the lives of Naga women was the spread of Christianity and education. Many educational institutions were set up in Angami and Chakhesang areas under the American Baptists missionary. C.D King and Rev. S.W. Rivenburg first started a school in 1878 in Kohima Districts and printed many books in the Angami language. Government schools like the Kohima Government High School and the Kohima College was started. In Phek districts, Government Primary School, Government High School, Baptist English School and Chizami English School was started. The educational foundation led many Angami and Chakhesang communities to come up with many pioneering activities in various fields. Prominent among them are: Dr. Haralu, Dr. Khosa Zinyü, A. Kevichusa, Dr. Neilhouzhü, Dr. Khrielieü Kire, and Goyiepra Kenye. The inception of the North Eastern Hill University at Shillong paved the way for further progress in education. Until 1974, schools were under the Board of Secondary Education, Assam. At present, the school administration in Kohima and Phek districts is headed by the District Education Officer (DEO) and functions under the administrative control of the Directorate of School Education. The DEO is assisted by three Deputy Inspectors of Schools (DIS) who in turn are assisted by eighteen Sub Inspectors of Schools (KDHDR 2009).

Christianity had improved the status of women by eliminating many rituals and taboos that were mandatory for the women in the past. Initially, Christianity was not accepted by the Angami and Chakhesang society due to the Christian doctrine that was totally against the superstitious beliefs of both the communities. The patriarchal structure

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35 Kohima Government School was started under Rev. Supplee and C.R. Pawsey, the then Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills, who became its first Headmaster in 1941. Kohima College was started in 1961 and became a government college in 1964. Government Primary School was started at Chizami in 1925 which was closed due to the mind set of villagers but was re-established again in 1931. Government High School was started at Pfitsero during 1962-63. The Chakhesang Baptist Church Council set up Baptist English School at Pfitsero in 1963 with separate hostels for boys and girls. Chizami English School with hostel facilities was set up in 1965 in Chizami village of Phek District.

36 Dr. Haralu, the first Angami doctor in the field of Medical Science who earned his Licentiate in Medical Practice (LMP) in early 1911. Dr. Khosa Zinyü, the first Angami medical doctor. A. Kevichusa, the first Angami Naga graduate. Dr. Neilhouzhü, the first Angami Naga matriculate. Dr. Khrielieü Kire, the first Angami Naga medical lady doctor. Goyiepra Kenye, the first matriculate and the first graduate among the Chakhesang communities.

37 Until 1900, there was no significant Christian conversion. Large scale conversion began in the 1920’s.
of the two societies did not tolerate any alteration which affected the customary laws imposed on the women.\textsuperscript{38} The practice of separating women during the \textit{Sekrenyi} or \textit{Phousanyi} festival was meant for good harvest and so, the Angami society did not tolerate abolishing this taboo. Similar reason was also stated \textsuperscript{39} by the Chakhesangs. Gradually, Christianity was accepted by the Angami and Chakhesang society only when the Christian doctrine merged along with their tradition and functioned within the patriarchal line. Singh (1994:71) also mention that, Christianity has accepted the agricultural calendar of the tribal societies of the past that requires woman to perform all the rituals.

Hence, in both the societies, Christianity during the British period had strengthened the patriarchal dominance of men on women. Though many Angami and Chakhesang women were allowed to take part in the church activities, they were not made the priests; it was the men who took dominance over the religious rituals. Thus, Angami and Chakhesang women’s religious roles remain the same as in the past and even during the British rule. The only difference was the involvement of the women folk with the communities that was not possible in the past\textsuperscript{40}. However, even after their Christianisation, they have not given up all their practices. Many of them participate in the \textit{genna}, which is a day of rest for the Animists in the village. No outsider may enter the village on that day (D’Souza, Kekrieseno and Nokhwenu 2002: 26-27). Thus, tradition and modernity live side by side. But this does not mean that Christianity did not improve women’s status during the British period. In fact, the Angami and Chakhesang women were empowered by the arrival of Christianity which encouraged them to attend schools and attain education in a formal way which was quite different from the informal ways of acquiring knowledge in the past\textsuperscript{41}. It was the first time, women actually got an opportunity to step out from their household premises and acquire equal footing with men.

\textsuperscript{38} The researcher was told by an elderly Angami woman of Kohima village during field work that, men was totally against abolishing taboo’s on woman especially on agricultural rituals.

\textsuperscript{39} The researcher was told by an elderly Chakhesang woman of Phêsachodû village during field work that Chakhesang society did not compromise rituals related to agriculture as it was the only source of their livelihood.

\textsuperscript{40} In the past, women were confined within their household.

\textsuperscript{41} In the past, both the Angami and Chakhesang women spend their time in the \textit{Kichuki} or \textit{Lîzhû}, where she learned how to socialize the young ones, the domestic chores, duties and culture taught by their elders.
in the field of education. Women during this period acquired the knowledge of domestic chores from their parents especially the mother.

The role of the Kichuki or Lüzhü started to decline and the family became a significant agent of socialization. The family especially the elderly female members (aunt, mother, grandmother) taught woman to be decent, soft and to remain pure with a high moral character. Right from birth, a girl child was expected to know work in the house and fields. Thus, the socialization process deeply imbued the girl child to learn household chores. The researcher was told by the respondents that, though education was made available to the communities, many parents were not willing to send their daughters to school, they were not encouraged to learn something that teaches them about ‘different environment’\(^{42}\). Many parents and communities also felt that too much of schooling would make the woman smarter which may create problem to their married life. Therefore even after the spread of education in the region, Angami and Chakhesang women got fewer benefits; it was the men who were actually allowed to go to school. They received full support from their parents and communities. In this sense, education did provide scope for job opportunities but that was given a secondary preferences. Hence, the men got the opportunities and began to dominate the women even in terms of their knowledge, skills and expertise. This strengthened patriarchy or male dominance and women became more dependent on their men.

In the administrative and political role too, both the Angami and Chakhesang women were still not selected as village chiefs nor allowed to participate in public meetings or inherit any of the ancestral property. Their property rights or inheritance rights remained the same. It shows that the two societies were changing but traditional practices remained unchanged for women. The family, religious, political role of Angami and Chakhesang women remained the same though some flexibility in their participation apart from their household chores was observed. It is interesting to notice that, the patriarchal system that began in the past got strengthened by the introduction of

\(^{42}\) Different environment here it means the western lifestyle, thoughts, dressing sense, their free mixing with people which were so different from the traditional practices.
Christianity and education and it was the ‘mother’- a woman who was actually strengthening patriarchy by not allowing their daughters to go to schools, to participate in any social gatherings, to make friendship and free mixing with people. That substantiates that many of the respondents were the daughters of those mothers who were putting restrictions on them.

3.2.2 The Present Scenario: Change and Continuity

Angami and Chakhesang women’s status remains the same even after christianity and education in the region during the colonial and post-colonial period. It is imperative to see the role of christianity at present times to see whether there is change or continuity in women’s traditional practices of the Angami and Chakhesang societies.

Though, all the Angami and Chakhesang respondents under study are Christians, 26 percent of the Angamis and 24 percent of the Chakhesangs regard that Christianity did not change the patriarchal structure. However, 18 percent of the Angamis and 17.3 percent of the Chakhesangs regard that christian society started the educational institutions for women. Only 7.7 percent of the Angamis and 9.3 percent of the Chakhesangs regarded that, Christian educational institutions had started vocational and professional training for self employment of women. 8.3 percent of the Angamis and 12 percent of the Chakhesangs regarded that Christian organizations had started women’s welfare programmes. Only 21.7 percent of the Angamis and 19.7 percent of the Chakhesangs considered that Christianity gave equal status to women. Again, 18.3 percent of the Angamis and 17.7 percent of the Chakhesangs regarded that Christianity gave freedom to women in choosing a job. These findings can be seen in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1: Perception about the Role of Christianity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Christianity</th>
<th>Angami</th>
<th>Chakhesang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity did not changed the patriarchal structure</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian society started the educational institutions for women.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian educational institutions had started vocational and professional training for self employment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian organizations started women welfare programmes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian society gave equal status to women</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity gave freedom to women in choosing a job</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Figures in this table and subsequent tables, unless stated otherwise, are compiled from 600 respondents through questionnaire method on Angami and Chakhesang women, Kohima and Phek Districts, Nagaland 2008-2011 (Age group 15-60 years).

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage)

Table 3.1 reveals that Christian educational institutions that were started had emphasized more on women’s education. It focused on providing almost equal status to women in terms of freedom to attend any schools or institutions and freedom to choose any career. Christianity did enhanced women’s status at present times but it could do little on vocational and professional training for self employment and welfare programmes for women. It shows that Christianity could not change the patriarchal structure that can be a stumbling block for women’s employment.

Though there is no biasness in the family and society against women’s education still there is a strong belief among the Angami and Chakhesang societies that the women’s subordinate position should be maintained.\(^{43}\) In a way, Angami and Chakhesang women themselves support those customary practices that favoured

\(^{43}\) The Angami and Chakhesang respondents mentioned that, they were encouraged to go to schools but they were made to consider household chores as their first priority. The respondents further said that, women are supposed to keep their husband and their family as their first priority as taught by their elders, even if she is educated or employed if situation demands to leave her job she should do it.
patriarchy. This situation reveals that in theory, both Angami and Chakhesang women enjoy equal status but in reality, she considers men as superior and assists him in most work.

At present though it was usual for a woman to be gifted with clothes, ornaments, a basket, paddy, cattle and even agricultural land at marriage, mainly by her mother, such practice were not binding. The Angami and Chakhesang women had the right to remain single. In such cases, she had the right to own a house, part of the ancestral land or they may even be gifted with a terrace field with absolute ownership. None in the family had a claim on her property that she could dispose the land and properties to any one she wished at her death. Usually, those who looked her during her lifetime became the heirs (Das 1993:71). Even today, when a family has two or more daughters, it is an obsession to have a male child to continue the family lineage and take care of the parents and clan property. Women are married off and become part of another family lineage.  

An important activity of the Angami and Chakhesang women is the practice of weaving. They wove shawls, mekhala (lungi- skirt), bags etc which gave them an extra income. During the colonial period, women had to depend on men to sell such product as they were not expected to come out of the confinement of the customary law that women could not mingle with the outsiders. At present, there is more freedom to mingle with outsiders but they still depend on their husband or parents and whatever they could earn was used for maintaining the family. Here again, women were considered not much a social being but a domestic being. In this context Vitso (2003: 70) rightly remarks,

“Inspite of all the freedom, women are still not free from the clutches of the traditional custom, which engulf them in every walk of life.”

It can be seen that there have been changes in the status of Angami and Chakhesang women over the past decades. Today, women compete with men in every aspects of their life. But still now there is low participation of women in the State’s

44 As told by the Angami and Chakhesang respondents.  
45 As told by the Angami and Chakhesang respondents.
economy. There are differences and obstacles between the earners and the non earners among the Angami and Chakhesang women. Those who are educated find alternatives in non-agricultural occupations that give them some freedom. While those who are uneducated find agriculture occupation as the only option.\textsuperscript{46} Besides, the male-oriented administrative system does not consider women equal partner in spite of their high educational achievement.

Thus, the post-colonial governments continue to strengthen patriarchy. Though the ‘legal provisions’\textsuperscript{47} were given to the communities but the interface with modernity made men to interpret it in their own favour (Kikon 2002:174-182). Men also resist women’s equality by citing tradition and religion in the education or any other spheres (Marak 163-164). Hence, patriarchy also got strengthened with legal provisions at present times. In the course of time, Angami and Chakhesang women too accepted their subordinate position and considered marriage, household work and upbringing of children as their first and foremost duties. Women are considered weak and so, work that needed hard labour or mixing with outsiders often becomes an obstacle for their employment outside the realm of the household and domestic agriculture. The patriarchal nature of the society limited the rights of women and stressed the dominance of men both, in words and deeds (Singh 1994:71).

\section{3.3 Unemployment Among the Angami and Chakhesang Women}

This section examines how the concept of ‘employment and unemployment’ emerged in the world and also in the Angami and Chakhesang societies. The role of traditional practices is then examined to clarify the ambiguity that customary laws restrict women’s mobility, property rights, economic, political, religious and societal role that leads to women’s unemployment.

\footnote{The uneducated Angami and Chakhesang respondents mostly depend on agriculture and weaving.}

\footnote{The Article 371 (A) recognized the Naga customary laws with special provision: “Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, No act of Parliament in respect of: (i) religious or social practices of the Nagas, (ii) Naga customary law and procedure, (iii) administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law and (iv) ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the state of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides.”}
Though there are several indicators of unemployment in different parts of the world, it is difficult to trace the point where it started. However, much discussion on unemployment was done on the Western countries. For instance, a notable degree of unemployment was common during the Industrial Revolution in England in the 16th century between the vagrants and jobless (See Abe, *Historical Development of Social Security Act*). With the rising population, poverty increased, creating chaos and political turmoil. The economy was unable to feed the rising population and several measures\textsuperscript{48} and welfare programmes\textsuperscript{49} were introduced to deal with the problem of unemployment. Despite this, the rate of unemployment could not be tackled to the fullest. Another historical incident is the impact of the ‘Great Depression’ in the 1930’s which was triggered in the United States and created massive unemployment throughout the world. Since then, western industrialized nations have tried with varying success to come to terms with the problem of unemployment. Similarly, soon after getting its Independence in 1947, India started its planned economic development in 1951 to combat the problems of unemployment. The entire North East India including the Naga Hills had been somewhat affected by the Great Depression because of the British rule in the region. Although this is a debatable issue, such historical events provide insights into understanding unemployment from a global perspective.

The arrival of the British in Nagaland and their development involvement in the area began to increase. They exert pressure on the local economy by imposing house taxes to be paid in cash. Gradually, the entire Angami and Chakhesang societies were incorporated into the colonial economic system. Thus, the traditional self-sufficient subsistence economy was exposed to the world for greater interference changing the whole equations of the economy, agrarian structure and land relations. The traditional self sustenance economy was transformed into market oriented commercialized agricultural industry with the introduction of cash crops. Their agricultural fields were easily

\textsuperscript{48} In 1535, a bill was drawn for creating a system of public works to deal with the problem of unemployment, to be funded by a tax on the income and capital. This allowed vagabonds to be whipped and hanged.

\textsuperscript{49} The introduction of one of the world’s first government sponsored welfare programme, ‘The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601’ which made a clear distinction between those who were unable to work and those able bodied people who refused employment. Under the Poor Law of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, a workhouse was provided for all those who were unable to support themselves. They could go there to live and work (See Hardcastle 1971).
converted into construction sites for commercial purposes. The transformation of land relations was accompanied by changes in the agrarian structure that divided the Angami and Chakhesang agrarian communities into different classes. At present, there are impoverished daily wagers at the bottom who were the actual workers; the marginal cultivators constituted a vulnerable to this impoverishment. The self-sufficient cultivators were potentially rich and there were also prosperous cultivators who controlled the affairs of the village. And yet, some remained cultivators only in name who were practically out of the agrarian structure. The same trend is continued till date that the agrarian structure at present is made up of categories that differ considerably from each other.

These changes in the agrarian structure have undoubtedly affected women the most. For instance, land that was a means of livelihood for the Angami and Chakhesang societies in the past became a commodity which can be bought or sold by anyone during the colonial and post colonial period. The land where female does most of the agriculture works were in the hands of the business contractors, Government and the man (Pienyü 2010). The situation became worst because both the Angami and Chakhesang women did not have the property or inheritance rights. Although, it was the women who spend most of their time in doing agricultural works like sowing, weeding, planting and carrying firewood. The change in land relations affected their very identity. Many women have been displaced from their livelihood with the growth of commercialization of land and increasing deforestation. The situation is the same in the case of the Angami and Chakhesang respondents. The market system began to be controlled by men. Their husband did not allow them to sell the agricultural products in the neighbouring areas. It was the men who went to the market, bought things and sold the goods. This emerging economic trends in their societies made women to lose their traditional control over their livelihood thus strengthening the

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50 The researcher observed that, many Angami and Chakhesang areas were sold out to the business contractors and the government.
53 As told by the Angami and Chakhesang women aged 40-49 years.
patriarchal ethos, weakening their equity-based culture and becoming just housewives (Barbora and Fernandes 2002:123-125). This situation created unemployment among women because the land where women domesticate animals, grow vegetables, gets raw materials for weaving that could give them some income had been sold off. Most of the Angami and Chakhesang respondents who depended on agriculture had been badly affected due to this shift. At present most of the uneducated Angami and Chakhesang, women are local wine brewers though there are educated women too in this occupation.

Thus, we see that unemployment gradually increased among women. The concept of employment, unemployment did not exist in the past prior to the British rule in the Angami and Chakhesang societies. These concept started gaining relevance after the introduction of the use of money as ‘a source and a medium of exchange’ in terms of goods and services. It is a fact that every human society is characterized by the desire for fulfillment of needs, comforts and luxuries. To satisfy the basic need for survival, human societies began to engage in various economic activities. The Angami and Chakhesang societies too began to depend on economic activities that grew with the growth of population, towns and cities creating markets and the emergence of middlemen. Salaried jobs did not exist in the past as barter system existed and money was not in use. The two tribal societies owned the land for making houses and produced food for consumption. The use of currency began when ‘their’ men moved to cities and thus raw materials and food became commercialized. Instead of growing, gathering or hunting food directly from nature, the Angamis and Chakhesangs began to depend on money to buy food and raw materials. Dependence on jobs to make money in order to buy food and shelter marked the beginning of unemployment. Individual farmers, doctors, merchants etc. were organized into large enterprises. Those who could not join or compete with others became unemployed.

55 Information gathered during field work in Kohima and Phek District.
56 The first salaried person who received payment in terms of their services was the Dobashis during the British rule in Nagaland.
57 ‘Their’ refers to Angami and Chakhesang men.
As long as the Angami and Chakhesang women had a predominant role in the agricultural activities, she exercised good control over the daily economy of the family. The village council which was made up of men alone chooses the plot for cultivation and the women took charge of it at that stage (Menon 1995: 79-154). With individual ownership and class formations, the control over the division of work shifted to men. New property ownerships began to established since the male elites interpreted the customary law to suit their ownership over the resources. With the State encouraging individual orientation in the commercial crops, whether women inherit the land or not, men begin to wield more political and social power than in the past (Marak 1997: 56-72).

Though employment of Angami and Chakhesang women in non- agrarian activities is a new beginning for their growth in a society, they still do not have the same access to jobs and salaries as that of men. Besides, even when they work outside, they are also responsible for household work, which increases their burden in spite of the attractions. Their double role makes it difficult for them to enter the job market. Besides, industrialisation has been lopsided across the region though it has played a major role in the primary process of agriculture and the secondary process of handicrafts (Fernandes 2004). At present, several variations can be noticed. There has been a gradual decrease in the number of people depending on agriculture and an increasing trend to obtain salaried jobs.

The above facts and analysis shows, notwithstanding the post colonial economic and social changes that has transformed the life of women to a better status, the idea that women needs protection from men to sustain their life is very deeply rooted in the subconscious mind of all people, both of women themselves and men, has not undergone any substantial change. Thus, the patriarchal structure and the ethos that supported it continue to operate in the interface with the market forces. The new market trends necessitate a highly advanced culture that engages every aspect of economic life.

58 As told by the educated Angami and Chakhesang respondents
regardless of the gender differences which can only be attained through a gradual process of gender equality from cradle to tomb; however, the moment a girl child is born she is encountered with numerous controls and do’s and don’ts which go deep into her conscious and subconscious mind creating a psychological barrier to self dependency and self assertion.

Angami and Chakhesang women are facing the hurdles to compete in the male dominated society that force them to sacrifice their opportunities and even when they get an opportunity to compete, they are made to consider their familial role as their first priority. Women are in fact performing the dual function as an economic earner at one hand and as a caretaker of home on the other hand. Women spent much of their time doing their household chores and they were not considered as a contributor to the family as household works are not considered as part of income. Though women in the past had some control in the economy as far as performing agricultural activities was concerned; but when the use of money replaced the barter system and when agricultural produce were commercialized, it was the men who started controlling the economy as it was felt that accounts could be better handled by men than women. Today, the situation is changing but still women have to seek advices from their husbands or family members in matters of finance. This clearly points out the submissive character of women and elements of social imperativeness regarding women’s economic independence. Women’s unemployment has not been seen as a serious issue as long as women live within the patriarchal umbrella and face the dual pressure from the family and the society. The Angamis and Chakhesangs are also facing the same situations. Whether it’s the tribal societies, Indian society at large or the Western Society, women everywhere face massive unemployment all over the world. The problem is a serious issue as even after the development of democratic ideals of liberty, equality and freedom women have to limit themselves within the patriarchal domain.
3.3.1 Traditional Practices as Causal Factor for Women’s Unemployment

Even in the present situation, women are regulated by the traditional customary laws. The traditional customary laws in the present society have aggravated the situation of women’s unemployment. A comparative picture of the Angami and Chakhesang respondents shows the traditional customary practices as causal factors for women’s unemployment.

Table 3.2 shows that, among the Angami respondents, the patriarchal line of thought still holds ground as 96.3 percent accept men as sole inheritors of ancestral property against a mere 3.7 percent who are do not know about property rights. As many as 83.3 percent consider gender and biological differences predominant as opposed to the 16.7 percent who do not consider any gender and biological differences existing in the present context. 76.3 percent still believe that men are superior to women in the family while 23.7 percent consider women equal partners. A total of 74.3 percent believed that higher education limited their choice of life partner while only 25.7 percent believed that higher education does not hamper their choice.

Thus, the Angami women are not opting for or give limited preference to higher education for fear of not getting a suitable life partner. 63 percent seek advice and opinions from their husbands or parents for choosing a job; the remaining 37 percent take independent decisions in the choice of work. This explains that majority of the Angami women are not given the freedom to choose their job independently. 57.3 percent consider man as the bread winner in the family while 42.6 percent do not feel the same because they are the bread winner. This validates that the Angami woman conceives man as the bread winner which makes the woman dependent on her parents or husband while some women are also the bread winner in the family. The restrictions on women are not eased as 53.3 percent are not allowed to work outside their home town limiting their employment opportunities to a great extent. Although 46.7 percent of them work outside their home town, their household work makes them compromise with their job opportunities. The perception that women should work only in the field is a traditional
notion but even today, 51.3 percent of them think that they should work in the field; while 48.7 percent do not support this view. They believe that women are capable of doing jobs in the service sector so they should venture out and not confine themselves to the field.

Among the Chakhesang respondents, while 85.3 percent cannot inherit the ancestral property due to customary laws, 14.7 percent do not know about property rights. It provides that as many as 76.7 percent of the women still depend on their parents or husbands against the 23.3 percent remain independent doing their own work or business. 75.7 percent still believe that men are superior to women in the family while 24.3 percent consider women equal partners. For them male members are always given high status and greater freedom than women. 75 percent consider male as the bread winner in the family while only 25 percent considers that women are also the bread winners in the family. In the case of selection of the partners, 75 percent view higher education as a limitation while 25 percent do not consider this to be true as they consider higher education widens the scope for better life partner. 70 percent seek advice and opinion from their family or husband and only 30 percent makes their independent decisions. As many as 62.7 percent consider that gender and biological differences is still prevalent against the 37.3 who do not find gender and biological differences existing in the present day society. A majority of 55 percent feel that women should venture out for salaried jobs as opposed to 45 percent who still consider that women should work only in the field. Though, 68 percent are allowed to work outside their home town, their household works make them compromise with their job opportunities. 32 percent found themselves restricted to work outside their home town due to family pressure and societal restrictions.
Table 3.2: Views on Customs, Beliefs and Traditional Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customs, Beliefs and Traditional Practices</th>
<th>Angami</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Chakhesang</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male considered as bread winners</td>
<td>172 (57.3)</td>
<td>128 (42.6)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>225 (75)</td>
<td>75 (25)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women depend on their parents or husband</td>
<td>185 (61.7)</td>
<td>115 (38.3)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>230 (76.7)</td>
<td>70 (23.3)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education limits mate selection</td>
<td>223 (74.3)</td>
<td>77 (25.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>225 (75)</td>
<td>75 (25)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women should work in the field</td>
<td>154 (51.3)</td>
<td>146 (48.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>135 (45)</td>
<td>165 (55)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women have to seek advice and opinions from family or husbands for choosing a job</td>
<td>189 (63)</td>
<td>111 (37)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>210 (70)</td>
<td>90 (30)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men are the superior members in the family</td>
<td>229 (76.3)</td>
<td>71 (23.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>227 (75.7)</td>
<td>73 (24.3)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women cannot inherit ancestral property</td>
<td>289 (96.3)</td>
<td>11 (3.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>256 (85.3)</td>
<td>44 (14.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women are restricted to work outside their hometown</td>
<td>160 (53.3)</td>
<td>140 (46.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>96 (32)</td>
<td>204 (68)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and biological differences still exist within the family</td>
<td>250 (83.3)</td>
<td>50 (16.7)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>188 (62.7)</td>
<td>112 (37.3)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage)

A comparison between the two tribes indicates that, the Angamis perception on male as bread winner is not very clear while the Chakhesangs (75%) strongly support male as bread winners in the family than the Angamis (57.3%). This is because most of the Chakhesangs (76.7%) depend on their parents and husbands than that of the Angamis (61.7%). Both the Angamis (74.3%) and Chakhesangs (75%) are almost equal in their perceptions that higher education limits their selection of a suitable life partner. The Angami and Chakhesang perceptions that women should work in the field are not very clear. However, they also feel that women should venture other areas apart from the field. This perception is slightly better in the case of the Chakhesangs (55%) than the Angamis (48.7%). In seeking advice from their family or husbands, both strongly supported this view however the Chakhesangs (70%) were ahead compared to the Angamis (63%). Both the Angamis (76.3%) and Chakhesangs (75.7%) strongly view men as the superior members in the family. Besides, both strongly believe that women

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60 Most of the Angami respondents were female bread winners as well so they do not consider the male as the only bread winner in the family.

61 There is a mixture of responses both from the Angami and Chakhesang women.
cannot inherit ancestral property; the Angamis showed more orthodoxy (96.3%) than the Chakhesangs (85.3%) in inheriting the ancestral property. With regard to women’s restriction to work outside their home town, the Angamis (53.3%) showed more orthodoxy compared to the Chakhesang (32%). The Angamis and the Chakhesang strongly believe that gender and biological differences still exist however, the Angamis (83.3 %) stressed more on the existence of gender and biological differences than the Chakhesangs (62.7%).

It is evident from table 3.2 that customs, beliefs and traditional practices continue to exist for both the Angami and Chakhesang women. Though there are cases of female as bread winners majority of the Angamis still feel men as sole bread winners. Thus, the women depend on their parents or husbands for almost everything. It is also ascertained that male dominance interferes with possibilities of education, choice of jobs and ancestral property rights limiting the scope of work to agriculture. Majority of the Angami women think that women should work only in the field for retaining pride and prestige that adds to their beauty while some also think that women should venture for other alternatives as well. Angami women are strongly restricted to work outside their home town in a way they are still not fully given freedom for free mixing with outsiders. The customs, beliefs and traditional practices that were thought to be of the past continue to be prevalent and perpetuate the gender and biological differences and categorize what it means to be male or female.

The Chakhesang women too is severely affected by the numerous customary belief systems that are rooted in the conscious and subconscious minds of the women for centuries, be it in the case of considering male as the bread winner; dependence on their parents and husbands; restrictions on education for the fear of not getting a suitable life partner; or ancestral property right, the consideration of male as superior still bind them. However, they feel that women should not be confined to the field, but should look out for salaried jobs. They hold that women have the freedom to choose their job independently but that they should seek the advices and opinion from their family or husband. Though women are not restricted to work outside her home, gender and
biological differences prevalent within the family and community do not allow the women to overcome the psychological and cultural fear and to accept their status as equal partners in the daily life. Thus traditional customs, beliefs and practices work as causes of women’s unemployment.

3.4 The Present Employment Status

This section examines the present employment status of the Angami and the Chakhesang women. In the past, the economic activities of Angami and Chakhesang women were centered on agriculture; their life revolved around agricultural activities. It is important to note that the Angami women are still not allowed to work outside their home town in a way they are not fully given the freedom to choose their job independently. They still depend on their family and husbands for their survival. While the Chakhesang women exercise considerable freedom to work outside their home town and in choosing their job yet, they too depend on their family and husband for their survival. This indicates a continued dependency syndrome among the Chakhesangs and strong patriarchal influence among the Angamis.

3.4.1 Factors Affecting Choice of Job

Even after introduction of modern education and structural changes in the economy, the Angami and Chakhesang women are not free as they heavily depend on their parents or husbands in matters of importance. After their marriage, they are expected to look after the household chores and children. The married women perform the role of a wife, mother and daughter in-law which leaves them with no time to earn and engage in any job independently thus affecting her potentialities as an earning member of the family. They often compromise with their jobs as many jobs are posted outside their home town which adds to their miseries. They are not allowed by their husband and family to work outside or faraway places. These findings can be seen in table 3.3.

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As stated in the Table 3.2, page 87.
Table 3.3: Views on the Factors Affecting the Choice of Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Migration</th>
<th>Both Marriage &amp; Migration</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angami</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakhesang</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 indicates that both the Angamis and Chakhesangs regard marriage and migration as a hindrance for the choice of job. The Angamis (90.3%) regard that marriage and migration\(^\text{63}\) affects their choice of job the most.\(^\text{64}\) While for the Chakhesangs (87.7%) marriage obligation affects their choice of job the most.\(^\text{65}\) This shows that marital obligations and restriction on migration is strongly imbued among the Angamis in their choice of job while it is marital obligations in the case of the Chakhesangs.

Modernization in the Angami and Chakhesang societies has resulted in the loss of traditional tribal values and customary economic notions. The development of social and economic overhead has not created a strong socio-cultural ground that would cater woman’s need as equal partners in life. She continues to be the sole homemaker legitimized by the customary law. In other cases, girls are sent for what are called female disciplines and boys to higher status male subjects that help them to get good jobs later (Karlekar 1983:191-211).

\(^{63}\) Migration here refers to the job posted far from their native place.

\(^{64}\) The Angamis responded that if jobs were posted far from their native place they chose not to take that job due to patriarchal dominance, family obligations and their marital status. Even though unmarried women get the freedom to choose any jobs they were rarely sent to far places away from their home town.

\(^{65}\) The Chakhesangs responded that marital obligations i.e. to look after their children, husband etc affects their choice of job the most but unmarried women has the full freedom to choose any kind of job anywhere.
3.4.2 Job Preferences

Being a Christian society both the tribes have been benefited with regard to equality and freedom in any thing they do. Most of them are educated and qualified. However, remnants of the discrimination and segregation are still deep rooted as the preference of subject of study reveals. The preference of job is shown in table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Views on Job Preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Preferences</th>
<th>Angami</th>
<th>Chakhesang</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32.3)</td>
<td>(38.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical (Doctor, Surgeon)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5.3)</td>
<td>(7.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13.3)</td>
<td>(7.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embroidery, Weaving</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.7)</td>
<td>(6.7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8.3)</td>
<td>(7.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage)

Table 3.4 indicates that both the Angami (32.3%) and Chakhesang (38.7%) respondents consider teaching as the best profession as it reflects feminine character. Professions like doctor and surgeon is preferred more by the Chakhesangs (7.3%) than the Angamis (5.3%) while preference for nursing is more among the Angamis (13.3%) than the Chakhesangs (7.7%).

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66 When encountered with questions the Angami and Chakhesang women responded that girls by large opt for arts while science and commerce was a natural choice for the boys and within the art subjects political science and economics are considered as male domain while education, sociology and English are female domain. Similarly, in science chemistry, physics are for the males; and biology and zoology for the females. Right from the beginning of their education, virtual division between male and female will be made and it is surprising that it is still continuing in the civilized modern society. This is not only seen in the subject women choose for their studies but also in their aspiration of their job preferences.

67 The Angami and Chakhesang respondents stated that women should possess a feminine character.
For the Angamis a nurse reflects feminine character while the Chakhesangs do not want to strain themselves to study and so they prefer embroidery and weaving (6.7%) which do not demand huge efforts; it is not the same in the case of the Angamis (2.7%) who did not want to be confined within the household (traditional role) by weaving and embroidery making. Both the Angamis and the Chakhesangs prefer business for their survival and economic independence. The Angamis responded slightly better (23%) than the Chakhesangs (21%) in this regard. Again, 15 percent of the Angamis prefer to be a beautician, tutor, air hostess and clerk because they have no hope of getting a job in the government sector. While 11 percent of the Chakhesangs prefer to be a warden, tutor and beautician since academic qualification are not required in such jobs. However, 8.3 percent of the Angamis and 7.6 percent of the Chakhesangs have no preferences at all they prefer to be house wives.

It is evident from table 3.4 that the Angamis give more importance to the expected image and role of married women while for the Chakhesangs it is lack of interest in studying and taking up labour intensive job. This indicates that both the tribes prefer jobs which are feminine in nature so that they could devote their time for household chores. Women living under the patriarchal structure have accepted their subordinate position which is reflected in their limited preferences as they gave high priority in fulfilling the duties as a girl-child, daughter, sister, mother, and daughter-in-law. Despite their qualification, women are expected to perform these pre destined roles not allowing them to go for professional courses. In this context, Jamir (2005) rightly points out that in spite of the much celebrated women ‘freedom’ within the family circles, when it comes to the employment choices; the last say belongs to the father or the husband.

The situation of their unemployment becomes very crucial from the fact that the Angami and Chakhesang women have not registered themselves in the Employment Exchanges. Though enrolling themselves in employment exchanges do not fully

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68 As stated by the Angami and Chakhesang respondents.
69 It was a great challenge for the researcher to find out all the unemployed women who were scattered all over Kohima and Phek Districts. Lack of information about a particular tribe in various statistical offices was another problem.
guarantee jobs for all those who enroll their names in it. However further information of their registration status will help the planners and policy makers to take effective steps to solve their problems to some extent. A diagrammatic representation of the present registration status of the Angami and Chakhesang respondents under study is shown in figure 1.

3.4.3 Status of Employment Registrations

With regard to status of employment registrations, figure 1 shows poor employment registration indices among the Angami and Chakhesang respondents. A comparative picture shows slight progress in the case of Chakhesang (87.7%) over the Angami (81.3%) respondents. Out of the total registered respondents, 18.7 percent are the Angamis while the Chakhesangs are limited to 12.3 percent. Thus, it is evident that the need to register in the employment exchanges is not a concern for both the tribes. The reasons for their negligence are varied: for some it is their primary engagements at home that do not allow them register while others have no hope of getting a job even if they register.

Fig. 1: Diagrammatic Representation of Employment Registrations

(Figures indicate percentage)
3.4.4 Status of Job Attempt

Though both the Angami and Chakhesang women consider employment as important, getting married to a man with a good income is more important than finding a good job. The failure of the Government to create awareness among women to register in the employment exchange can be another reason. However, this does not mean that both the tribes are not attempting to get a job. Many women have realized that their unemployment is limiting their role at home and outside and so they are venturing for different types of jobs. A diagrammatic representation on the status of job attempt among Angami and Chakhesang respondents is shown in figure 2.

**Fig. 2: Diagrammatic Representation of Job attempt**

![Diagram](image)

(Figures in the bracket indicate percentage)

As shown in figure 2, the Angami and Chakhesang respondents have shown their interest in attempting for a job. The Angamis (59.6 %) participation in job attempt is higher than the Chakhesangs (39.7%) though the over all rate of participation is quite low. The Chakhesangs participation and interest in job attempt is very low (60.3 %) as compared to the Angamis (40.3%). Further specification of their job attempt failure is given in table 3.8.

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70 As stated by the Angami and Chakhesang respondents.
3.4.5 Specification for failure in Job Attempt

The Angami and Chakhesang women have been influenced by the modern values of equality with men in every field; however competing to get a better job is a great challenge for them. The patriarchal ethos of the system limits their career choices. Angami and Chakhesang women themselves have accepted their subordinate position and in course of time, have not given enough importance to find a job. In the field of competitive exams, the Angami and Chakhesang woman are at lower ebb as right from birth she is expected to learn the household chores and work in the fields. She is taught to be decent, soft and to remain pure with a high moral character and hence, is forced to avoid socialisation developing deep rooted dependency syndrome. Traditional family concepts stand as stumbling block for women’s employment leaving the family in greater economic trouble in an era characterised new economic paradigms.

Table 3.5: Specifications For Failure in Job Attempt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tribes</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Pressure</td>
<td>Financial Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angami</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakhesang</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 shows that out of the 121 Angamis who have not attempted for a job 60.3 percent consider family pressure as the main reason, 18.1 percent spoke of financial problems; 10.7 percent of early marriage; 8.2 percent of lack of interest; and 2.4 percent consider lack of proper education as a cause of their failure to attempt a job. Among the Chakhesangs, out of the 119 who failed to attempt for a job, 32 percent consider financial pressure as the main reason followed by 27.6 percent on family problems; 21.5 percent on lack of proper education; 11 percent on lack of interest while 7.7 percent on early marriage as a cause of their failure to attempt a job. A comparative picture shows that
among the Angamis the reason for not attempting any job is family pressure (60.3 %) while for the Chakhesangs it is due to financial problems (32%).

When asked\textsuperscript{71} what they will do after frequent failure in the competitive exams, even the most educated women said that they would get married. Therefore, the educated women: i) lack the spirit of competitiveness; ii) accept their subordination; and iii) give preference to marriage over a job. Another norm of the customary law specifies that both the Angami and Chakhesang women should get married and bear a child. They are respected and welcomed in their society because they ensure the continuation of the tribe through child bearing and rearing. Hence, their priorities are to remain as the cord of continuity of the community and then, the household work such as cooking, cleaning, and washing than becoming salaried individuals.

Thus one can see that the customary law continues to play a role in strengthening patriarchy among the Angami and Chakhesang societies. Though it was said that education changed the mind set of the Angami and Chakhesang communities it was practical only for some while many still retain their traditional beliefs. Transition from the bonded life to the western lifestyle was a slow process because the traditional practices were deeply rooted with their religious life. The fact that both the Angami and Chakhesang communities were changing with the spread of Christianity and education partially holds true in the sense that, changes were seen more to be in their ‘material culture’ than their ‘non-material culture’.\textsuperscript{72} Women’s roles are weakened by customs and traditions which put on them the tag of being inferior or weaker section. When Vitso (2003: 60) says, “chu gwa kekhe chi-e mo vo gwa kekhe”, she indicates the status of women as inferior and weak. Another expression, “chi lo chiemo, chilo su ni tsümi lu ba kelie bi”\textsuperscript{73} shows how women’s decision cannot be relied upon. Women was/are expected to master in agricultural and household work. If they do not possess mastery over

\textsuperscript{71} On Angami and Chakhesang respondents during field work
\textsuperscript{72} Material culture includes their type of housing, dress, ornaments and utensils; Non-material culture includes their beliefs, customs, thoughts and perceptions.
\textsuperscript{73} In Chakhesang, dialect “chu gwa kekhe chi-e mo vo gwa kekhe” means dogs need no fence while pigs need to be fenced. Dogs refer to men and pigs are women who need to be confined within the customary law. “chi lo chiemo, chilo su ni tsümi lu ba kelie bi” means one cannot predict the weather; it is like a woman’s heart.
agricultural and household work (even for highly educated women), they are looked down upon by the communities such belief exists even today. Most of the customary laws of the Angami and Chakhesang societies prescribed strict regulation on women’s duties and conduct and it is to be followed meticulously. The patriarchal structure of both the societies undoubtedly established such customs and traditions that keep their women under the dominion of men in the family. The general view that women in tribal society enjoy status with that of men holds true only in the domestic roles that is considered as women’s domain but when it comes to the workings of the customary law in the society, women do not enjoy equal rights as that of men. Women are assigned with certain duties and roles (pre-destined status) that it restricted their mobility; their property rights and also their economic, political, religious and societal roles.

The modern society is not alien to the customary laws; they are prevalent even today. Article 371 A (1) of the Constitution of India allows the Nagas to manage their civil affairs according to the customary laws (cited in Lohe 2011: 217). It is a sign that the customary law has strong influence in the Naga society till date regulating the life of every section of the people. The customary law on women is not seen as an offence because it is maintained and enforced by the will of the community. Punishments are still severe especially, for those women who violate the customary laws. At present, the legal provisions strengthen patriarchy and women too had accepted their subordinate position and considered marriage, household works and upbringing of children as their first and foremost duty. Though there is decreasing bias in the family and in the society against women’s education, there is a strong belief amongst the tribe that the women’s subordinate position should be maintained; even women support the customary practices that favour patriarchy. Therefore, it would be a rational conclusion to state that the traditional role of women existing even today has limited women’s job preferences and that has aggravated women’s unemployment.