CHAPTER – 2

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY
2.0 FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This chapter begins with a review of some selected studies and proceeds to describe the major objectives of the study and sources of data. An attempt has been made to review broadly some major studies in the field of women and politics, and subsequently focus on those studies which have examined the role of women in politics in India in general and Nagaland in particular.

2.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From the historical perspective, mass participation of women in the Indian Nationalist Movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a unique phenomenon. It was not the result of imitation of any western model. Women in the industrialised west were primarily involved in the demand for suffrage; they were motivated by a desire for personal gain and for benefiting their own group. On the other hand, women in India were generally committed to the independence of the country. They felt a sense of nationalist pride in Indian society and culture. The primary focus of their activity was therefore not feminist but nationalist.

The book by Pratima Asthana ¹ provides a well-documented story of the women’s movement in India manifesting the various forces, which have influenced their progress from the earliest times to the present day. It opens with a brief but illuminating introduction to the subject and then studies lucidly the
impact of the west, which, as the author says, restored the long-lost self-confidence of Indian women. It gives a comprehensive account of the contributions of the leading reformers to the cause of women highlighting the efforts made by the women leaders, which created an awakening among Indian women. It also critically examines the work done by the various women’s organizations, whose establishment marked the maturity of the feminist movement in India, for the uplift and progress of women. Analyzing the cases of the backwardness of women it makes a sharp appraisal of the progress of female education in India. The author concludes that the women’s movement has always been a class struggle and after independence it met the same fate as the national movement, it has become a “spent force.”

The study by Vijay Agnew provides a perceptive analysis of the role of elite women in Indian politics. It opens with an illuminating historical background to the subject and goes on to assess the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi, the impact of the west and the role of women in extremist politics and the Congress. It also makes a sharp appraisal of women’s organizations and the suffrage movement.

Kalpana Shah made an attempt to analyze the relationship between ideologies, leadership and programmes of the women’s movement by focusing on the ways in which voluntary organization called Akhil Hind Mahila Parishad (AHMP) organized its activities to achieve its objectives. It examines the central issues of development of women’s consciousness in the context of the
mobilization of middle class women. The author highlights the limits of the welfare programmes undertaken by middle class women’s movement and shows how many such movements unwillingly strengthen the traditional image of women and thus perform a very restricted role.

The role of the AHMP is reviewed in the light of the radical action programmes undertaken by several women organizations, which have come up recently. The author highlights the relationship between ideological shifts and action programmes in the women’s movement. The study gives new insights into the problems and organizations of women and voluntary action.

Mary Evans in her study of the women question brings together the most influential analyses of women’s position in society, which have emerged in the past decade. When the first edition appeared in 1982 it rapidly established itself as a definite selection of classic feminist writings. This wide-ranging new set of readings reflects the challenges and complexities of feminism in the 1990’s. The discussion encompasses both theoretical issues of identity and the economic and political status of women. It demonstrates the impact of gender not only on how the social world is organized but also on how we understand and interpret that world. Recognizing the diversity of women’s experiences, it pays particular attention to the interactions of race, class, gender and sexuality.

Leading feminists explore the concept of gender difference, its impact on women and its representation in culture. They discuss the material realities of
women's lives and how these are differentiated by race. They examine women's relation to powerful institutions, especially the state, and analyse the successes, failure and contradictions of feminist politics.

K.C. Vidya has taken up an overview of the role and position of women in some institutions. It indicates that the women have entered these institutions for the first time by introduction of policy of reservation but they have to go a long way to prove that they are equally capable as men. The policy of reservation provided for women are important not as an end in itself but as a step forward in promoting women's participation in the grassroots of democracy. The study is brief but quite insightful in the context of emerging scenario in the country today.

Krishna Raj's edited volume throws light on areas where gaps are visible and new paradigms are necessary if women's lives and experiences are to be incorporated in the social sciences not as peripheral concerns but as the actions of one half of humanity in shaping human destiny. Women should cease to be treated as a 'social problem' as outside the purview of mainstream social science theory. The discussions presented are not only women's concerns; they are central to a more civilized reconstructing of human society.

Roy also dealt with the role and participation of women in Indian politics. Women still face many obstacles in their fight for representation. No women's organizations specifically focus on getting women elected at the national level. Unlike the earlier elite women activist, most women have not had
the economic freedom to choose their life and carrier. Many untouched young women may be politically active, but once married, they disappear from the political scene. In spite of the progress since independence, lack of education and lack of knowledge about the intricacies of party politics among many novelite women have limited their participation in the formal political arena. The role of money, the corruption in politics, and growing violence against women have also been discussed by Roy and shows how they constrain many potential activists to enter politics.

Above all, Roy suggests that if the Indian women’s movement is to become a viable/recognized and important political actor, it must not isolate itself either from diversity of India or from myriad other social and political movements within the country. It must find a way not only to respect the diversity of India but also establishes itself as an important part of diversity.

Champa Limaye’s book contains a collection of articles dealing with women’s participation in various struggles. It has covered India’s freedom struggle, struggle for equality in South Africa, Goa Liberation Movement, Dr. Ambedkar’s Movement and also women’s liberation movement. Here the author has also discussed delicate problems pertaining to the other aspects of women’s life like unmarried motherhood, mother’s lineage and the tradition of Sati. There are articles on women’s role in the Legislatures, the approach of new women’s organizations in solving women’s problem. Some articles throw light on customs in some nomadic tribes and among the former untouchables. The
second part of the book contains sketches of few women who have contributed in various fields. All in all in this informative book one gets glimpses of various facts of Indian womanhood.

*Women Images* provides revealing analysis and an insight about a variety of issues that are crucial to an understanding of the multiplicity of women images in Indian society. The commonly perceived image of women in India is that of the self-sacrificing individual. *Pativrata*, the cultural ethos reflects an essential plurality of visions and emphasizes upon “the complementarity of men and women.” The essays in this anthology illuminate a variety of images of women from ancient to modern times as reflected through art, literature, classical and folk traditions and politico-nationalist polemics. It emerges from the essays that woman images to exert a powerful influence on the social order and situation of Indian women in many ways. It is emphasized that though images are usually seen as “historical indices of social conditions,” their real significance resides not merely in being “historical scraps” but in providing perennial pointers of ideal possibilities.

This anthology is intended to contribute to an objective understanding of the perceptions, visions and ideas about Indian women with a view to providing them an identity for their role in society.

Asima Sahu in her book *Women Liberation and Human Rights* has examined the question of women liberation and human rights. Women’s
Liberation is a movement that was scoffed at and ridiculed in the early days. When women took steps to emancipate her and break out of the traditional mould of the weaker sex and prove that she could stand as an equal with her male counterpart, she was held up in the contempt. But the early women activists persisted in their determination to struggle, a struggle that is continued even today in different forms and in different parts of the world, has produced results—though not so satisfying or complete.

As the struggle for emancipation took roots, the realization of the rights of women too began to take shape. Being suppressed, oppressed and harassed over the centuries, and always kept in the ‘second place’ by man, their efforts to ‘break out’ were not appreciated by all. Attempts were made to keep them in their place. And thus their rights mingled with human rights and began drawing the attention of the enlightened world.

On the whole, it is an interesting account of the women’s liberation movement and human rights involved. Not only those connected with the movement, but even the general reader will find it interesting to know what the women’s liberation movement is all about and how it comes to be. This book is also useful in understanding the issues of the equality of the sexes and the background of the circumstances which has brought it.

Women constitute almost half of our population. No society can progress, neglecting women folk. Though Indian Government has been much sensitive
towards women’s development and welfare but no fruitful results are visualized so far. Very recently, Government has taken laudable steps in improving the lot of women, but no effort can bring desired results unless and until current problems and status of women are unfolded. This volume by Tripathi and Tiwari is devoted to the same objectives. 

In the last forty years, Indian polity, economy and society have undergone a change, which has created a new awareness and sensitivity about their status and rights among the educated women. They are making efforts to have equality with men in all the spheres. This edited volume by Sushila Agarwal examines the status of women by different scholars from constitutional, legal, social and religious aspects in India and also on the status of women in Canada. This constitutional provision in India has been analyzed in the context of social reality and traditional value framework. Special provisions of Indian Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes for the protection of women who could be victims of offences in public and private life because of gender have also been examined. Property rights of women under Hindu Law from Manu to present day bring out correlation between property rights and status of women. Dealing with the social dynamics and status of women in Islam an eminent scholar writes that a distinction is established between the social tradition and religious scripts in Islam. It has been argued how purely a feudal attitude with corresponding interpretation of the Quran during the medieval ages came to be thought to have religious sanction, ‘women in Muslim Community can be the catalyst of change.’ An improvement in their status would be crucial step in the modernization of the
community. Another phenomenon is that greater emphasis on political and economic modernization has created serious strains on the social and cultural life of rural people specially women. The book also deals with the role of educators in raising consciousness and in providing girls and boys skills to effect change in perception of the role of the men and women.

An eminent Canadian scholar has discussed various aspects of the status of women in Canada and examined various measures undertaken by the government machinery and women organizations leading to an improved status of women yet “discrimination against women is unlikely to be destroyed within a generation.” This provides comparative knowledge and understanding about the status and rights of women in India and Canada.

The authors, Parikh and Garg trace the journey of women to maturity and the many thresholds they cross on the way. They deal with women’s processes of being and becoming and the heritage of folklore, myths and role models, which influence and affect these processes. The authors outline five major role models for women, which are dominant in Indian Society. Tracing the historical loci of these models, the authors argue that even though these models have become out-dated given the changing mores and life-styles, Indian women are still expected to conform to them. This clash between role expectations and current realities has created considerable tension for today’s women and is the major source of her pathos.
However, while women are at the receiving end of many negative attitudes and constricting stereotypes in Indian society, the authors believe that, in the final analyses, they are often victims of their own restricted vision. They believe that Indian women (as also men) still have to discover a third identity, which is neither male nor female but human. This identity encompasses the other two identities and is a liberating and life-giving force, which can revitalize not just women but society, at large.

The question of women and development is the theme of Joshi’s study. The gradual realization that large percentage of population in India has been bypassed by economic growth, led to the awareness that economic growth, to be meaningful, must be attended by increasing participation of masses especially women as it is the only meaningful way of transforming purchasing power and raising the general level of well being. Although, economic deprivation to about half of our population has been inherited from our past subjugation, yet we have exacerbated it by perpetuating social backwardness, inequalities of gender and caste outmoded traditions and divisions and a new individualistic cynicism.

The entire social structure should be revitalized and new norms be created where equality and freedom irrespective of class, caste, religion or gender be practiced as human rights responsibilities. The women should be allowed to use their full potential. Through adequate measures of health, education, skills and intellectual as well as moral capabilities, they should be equipped to raise the quality of life. Social change through equal treatment for the girl child and
reducing son preference, schooling for both boys and girls, empowering women and providing them new skills for income generation is need of the hour. The gender inequality as well as of early marriage and early age of the mother at time of first birth must be tackled vigorously.

The book deals with the theoretical controversies as well as empirical findings with a view to establish the fact as to how far the changing socio-economic set up in the rural economy during the process of economic development over a period of five decades is acting and reacting to the women education, employment opportunities, participation in household, farm and non-farm activities, dowry, purdah and widow remarriage system as well as the role of women in decision making in different spheres.

The issue of development is also the theme addressed by Chetana Kalbag. The role of women in social and economic development of nations has acquired a new and crucial dimension stemming from the imperatives of social change and modernization. The past two decades have witnessed an awareness and realization of the need for the total involvement of women in the process of change, progress and development, yet, this is merely a confirmation of the significant role that women have been fulfilling in all walks of life-rural, urban, domestic as well as professional, as construction workers and nurses, across the range to executive positions in the corporate sector, to administration, the law, politics and industrial and commercial entrepreneurship. In a developing country such as India, the role of women in change and modernization assumes a high
profile in view of the contrast provided by the co-existence of traditional and modern levels of opportunity and achievement.

Jharta highlights that with the advent of feminism in the USA in 1960s, women’s studies got academic currency and recognition. In India, the interest in women’s studies received fillip after the International Women’s Year in 1975. While scholars have devoted a good deal of attention to the study of socio-economic position of women in India, Jharta says that very little attention has been paid to the role of women in politics in the context of changing scenario. No study in political arena in the democratic set-up can be possible without taking into consideration women’s role and position. Without investigating into the nature and scope of their participation in politics, we would not be in a position to have an adequate and objective assessment regarding democratic participation and the framing of right policies, programmes and laws for the welfare and uplift of women.

Jharta analyses and evaluates the role and impact of family and education on women’s participation in politics. This is a micro-level empirical study confined to the women’s segment of the political realm of the State of Himachal Pradesh. In the study, family and education have been taken as two major determinants to examine the political participation of women. These two variables have been chosen mainly because they are significantly related to the political participation of women and are considered booster as well as hindrance in their participation in politics. Jharta also seeks to explore how and to what
extent these variables affect the nature and scope of women’s participation in politics and determine the variation in their participatory level.

The All India Women’s Conference completed sixty-three years in 1990. Yet little work has so far been done on the contributions of women’s organizations to women’s development. In this interesting study Aparna Basu and Bharati Ray make a detailed study of the AIWC and its role in Women’s development in the last six decades. Founded in 1927 at the initiative of Magaret Cousins, the first session of the conference was held at Poona. It brought together women from different regions, religions and castes. Among the pioneers who shaped the organization were, to name a few, Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Rani Chimnabai Goekwad of Baroda, Shareefah Hamid Ali, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Vijyalakshmi Pandit.

The book focuses on the efforts of the AIWC in the fields of education, social legislation and social reform. The conference played a notable part in initiating the Child Marriage Restrain Act of 1929 and a Uniform Civil code has not still materialized, it has achieved success in having the Hindu Code Bill passed.

The volume also outlines the various socio-economic programmes undertaken by the different branches of the AIWC all through these years. It examines the changing nature of the programmes undertaken and how far the conference has been able to respond to the needs of women. The volume makes
extensive use of the Conference records and should be great interest to scholars of history as well as those of women’s studies.

Pandey and Upadhaya seek to present the status of women in India of yesterday and today for three distinct, yet intimately interlinked, angles-praxis, theory and research. The analysis is premised on the assumptions that all thoughts and theory are interlinked with history and tied to human interests and social life processes; that the process of knowing cannot be severed from historical being; and that research established the kind of interconnections that exist in definite social groups in definite periods of time and indefinite countries.

The analysis reveals that the status of women in India has steadily deteriorated all rounds; ideologically, women have come to be considered a completely inferior species, inferior to the male; individually, denied individuality and personality; morally, accused of lacking ethical fibre; economically, treated unearthly of having rights to property; politically, excluded from power positions; and socially, assigned the private sphere of life and kept in subjection. Underneath these prevailing practices underlie ideologies justifying the existing status of women and the accompanying research methodology of the dominant social science theory that leads to distort facts on women’s status.

Poonacha collection of nine papers presented at a joint Indo-German seminar on “Women, empowerment and political participation” organized by Research Centre for Women’s Studies SNDT Women’s University. This
collection examines the ongoing experiments in countries as culturally diverse as India and Germany to enhance women’s political participation. With mounting pressure from the disadvantaged sections of society for an equal share in social, economic and political opportunities, several governments have responded with some form of affirmative action. One variation is the system of “quotas” as in Germany or “reservation” as in India to ensure a certain number of seats for women in representative government bodies. The move to extend reservations for women in the state and central legislatures, although having great empowering potential for women, is not without its detractors. On the whole, there seems to be substantial consensus in India that given the currently deplorable state of women’s representation in the Lok Sabha, a thirty three percent reservation for women in the local government bodies and eventually in the national parliament is necessary though not sufficient condition for women’s total political participation in the future.

Susheela Kaushik argues that Women’s rights and women’s equality cannot be achieved unless women in large numbers are visible and active. With this view, the National Commission for Women has been advocating distribution of tickets for more women candidates and has been lobbying for this with the various political parties. Despite these efforts only a limited number of women got tickets from various political parties for the 9th Lok Sabha Election. This report examines the various factors which contribute to the success/failure of the women and men candidates in the elections. This study was undertaken in six Lok Sabha constituencies across the nation- South Calcutta, Gaya, Hapur
Ghaziabad, Ludhiana, South Madras and South Delhi. A summary of the findings of these studies which has been undertaken by Women's Studies Centres and Women's Research Organizations on behalf of the National Commission for Women, is included. The study includes the candidate's profile; the issues raised by the candidates, their campaign strategy, their focus on women's issues, and the voters' response to the women candidates, particularly on gender issues and the factors which contributed to their success or failure in the elections. The study also analyses the facilities they require as well as the limitations they face. The author has given a set of recommendations in order to bring more women successfully into our legislative bodies. Even though Independence brought with it the opportunity for equality in the social and political spheres through the constitution, women remained underrepresented in the decision-making bodies. Their presence in representative institutions was never commensurate with their strength in national life. The author concludes that in the fiftieth year of India's independence, this lopsided and imbalanced state needs to be reversed and women in India should attain their rightful place.

In another significant study Susheela Kaushik discusses the nature of Women's Participation in Politics. This book contains a set of papers from the first four National Conferences of Indian Association for Women's Studies. These papers take stock of the political and feminist consciousness of women and their participation in different types of grassroots movements in the post-independence years. The participation had sharpened their understanding of patriarchal forces and empowered them not merely to promote women's rights
and mainstream themselves but also to redirect the broader movement to the values of gender equality and justice. Women Studies scholars while examining the nature and extent of influence and participation of women in the political processes of India, are conscious of the democratic institutions and socio-economic and political context in which they operate. They are wary of the patriarchal values and their dominance over these operations and the formidable combination which the women are forced with. Working within the existing political conditions the women’s movement seeks to promote greater participation of women at all political levels but specifically at the grassroots level.

The study by Bishaka Datta is an in-depth study of some Indian rural women’s attempts to carve out their own political space within an existing male dominated political system. The book critically examines twelve all women panchayats in Maharashtra from a women’s perspective inter-twining elements of rural sociology, politics and feminism. The study is presented in two sections. The first part looks at all panchayats barring the Shetkari Sanghatan Panchayats which are clubbed together in the second section. The book points out that even if women have come to power at the behest of men, they have managed to place their needs on the political agenda. Women have also learnt to be creative tactically. The book offers insights on participation and empowerment discussing the prospects of a more gender-just society.
Madhu Kishwar focuses on women politicians and points out that Women's Reservation in its present form has serious defects. The bill, as presently drafted, jeopardizes the possibility of sensible planning to contest a political constituency for both men and women. It will create special difficulties for women. Since very few women politicians have a strong electoral base, this uncertainly about the constituency will make them even more dependent on male bosses of their party. A likely strategy for them to adopt would be to bring in their wives and daughters as proxies to keep the seat “safe” for them until the next election. The author remarks that the ‘Biwi-Beti Brigade’, in fact, acts as a definite block against the emergence of independent minded women who wish to make a space for themselves on their own strength in public domain. Those who have had a long history of working on women’s issues have been denied a hearing on the merits and demerits of the reservation scheme. Even leading MP and party-office bearers are not consulted before drafting the manifestos. There were no spontaneous protests by women when the bill was unceremoniously torn to shreds in Parliament.

The whole debate on reservations centres on some myths, says the author. The male leaders of certain backward castes are the ones most likely to benefit from women’s reservations in comparison to most other groups and parties. The demand for reservation within reservation demonstrates how the very logic of reservations can be stretched endlessly. The author has discussed an alternative bill in Manushi No. 96 in which she suggested multi-seat constituencies for those who are enamoured with 33 per cent reservation whereby one out of every three
candidates elected form a combined constituency would be a woman. The author concludes that the quota system will inevitably unleash unending demands for further reservations within the quota.

In the context of women's participation in Naga Politics, Hokishe Sema has provided a fascinating account of the origin of Nagas, their chivalrous dispositions and sound customs in his interesting book. In this land of mystery, the ambitious British and the ambivalent missionaries made inroads during the early nineteenth century. In the skirmishes that followed, the Nagas could not withstand the sweeping tide of the imperialism and had to embrace Christianity. Sema shows that during the Second World War some of the young Nagas scooped a stockpile of arms and ammunition left in the thick jungles and when the war was over, they raised the slogan of an independent Nagaland under the leadership of Phizo. During this period the common man’s agony was indescribable. He narrates the inside story of the underground movement, reveals the concerns of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi for the Nagas and upholds the democratic traditions for the peace and progress of Nagaland.

An outstanding feature of the ethnographic situation in Nagaland is the emergence and consolidation of the Nagas as a political and territorial community. A volume under the People of India Project on Nagaland covers twenty-five communities, out of which fifteen are Naga communities. The study shows that Nagaland represents a fine model of synthesis of modernity and tradition. The introduction of the Village Development Board has drawn
countrywide attention for its effective role in ensuring popular participation in the
development programme at the grassroots level. This inquiry highlights the recent
socio-economic changes that are taking place in the state.

In the years before Independence in 1947, the Nagas of North East India
came to exemplify an exotic society. Peoples of the Hills, radically different in
culture and belief from the better-known Hindu peoples of the plains, they were
renowned for their fierce resistance to British rule and for their former practices
of lead taking. Although sharing many social and cultural traits, such as feast
giving as a means of acquiring status, the thousands of small Naga villages,
perched on isolated hill spurs, seemed often to be very different from each other.
They adopted different political systems ranging from the egalitarian to the
autocratic, and spoke more than a dozen mutually unintelligible languages.
Appearing to be both one people and many tribes, the Nagas displayed both unity
and diversity in their dress and ornament. Drawing a diverse range of historical
materials, the authors examine how the notion of tribes came to be applied to the
Nagas and point out its subsequent importance in the development of
contemporary Naga nationalism.

The Indo-Naga National question in North-east India is a practical
politics. The book by Julian Jacobs and others is a study of Naga political theory
and practice in making Naga history. Written by an indigenous scholar at the
time of crucial juncture in Naga contemporary society, this book carries the collective viewpoints of the insiders in quest of solving the on-going issue.

After-tracing the origin of the Naga people's movement for freedom, it examines various stages of development inviting lessons that may be learned from the past events for achieving their desired goal. The book dishonours the occupational attitudes and speaks about the struggle, the dream and the determination of the Nagas to live as 'People' for love of freedom. As a positive writing, many controversial concepts like human rights violations, Naga nationhood, Naga people hood, Indigenous People's Rights, the question of self-determination, the legitimate rights of the Nagas and their claims are forcefully argued adding critical observations on the problem. The book further argues as to how long the Nagas would suffer because of that unsettled political issue between two parties, "India and the Nagas". The author hopes that this problem would come to an end one day and argues why it should not be possible to bring a final settlement between them. For this end, the author gives a clarion call for the Naga National Unifications for successful initiation of their problem with India. This volume carries a series of questions and answers paving the way for solution of not only the Naga issue but in reorganizing the whole North-East Region. Since it is a political issue, it requires academic debates and arguments. This makes the book too hot to handle, but easy to understand or to be misunderstood if wrongly interpreted.
Lucy’s book is a collection of papers, presented in a seminar organized by the Naga Students’ Union, on women among the major Naga tribes. The papers look at the Naga society from the traditional and modern scenario, which provides vital information on the Naga women from both the men and women’s point of view. This collection is an exploratory study and examines various dimensions of the status of women in Naga society.

Aosenba deals with the Naga National movement with its national and international dimensions. The study is a contribution to the fields of security/strategic and peace studies apart from touching on problems of modernization and stabilization in the developing countries. It has involved a selective use of historical materials some of which are available only in London. It was necessary to condense a large amount of material which included unpublished source material. The research design adopted also makes it relevant to contemporary problems faced by Naga political society and policy questions facing the underground Naga and the Government of India.

The author attempts to explore why the Naga political movement has endured over the last five decades after India’s Independence? What are the dynamics of Naga ethno political movement? What role does leadership play and what are the possibilities of internationalization of Naga issue, its external implications and prospects of management of the problem? It is argued that the Naga demand for a “Greater Nagaland” is clearly linked with the growing tide of Naga Nationalism.
The central argument of this study is that the Indo-Naga conflict with its bloodshed, military patrols and encounters and human rights violations can give way to an era of peace and prosperity if the discourse of domination and militarization is replaced by the creation and projection of images of peace, and differences are dealt with “by designing a problem solving process that promotes new thinking of long-standing problems.”

Asoso Yonuo mentions about the Nagas living in the North East corner of India bordering with Burma and China. They have been in the limelight of history for centuries. The beginnings of their recorded history may be traced to the time of the Ahoms who invaded the Brahmaputra valley in the early 13th century. In this work of assiduous scholarship, the author who is himself a Naga, provides the first comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the subject. Starting from the early history of the Nagas, their relations with the Meiteis, Assamese, Burmese, etc, he surveyed all the historical events which brought the Nagas under the British rule mainly through military expeditions against their village-states, leading to the war of independence in 1879 – 80. The changes brought out by the British rulers and the American Christian missionaries in the Naga Hills, the background to the revolt against free India’s government, the role of Phizo and other rebel leaders and that of foreigners in it, the events leading to the formation of the state of Nagaland and the current state of affairs are dealt with in detail.

The author’s first hand knowledge of his people and his talks with both the Naga leaders and the government representatives, make his picture of the
contemporary Naga world vivid and rewarding. This well-documented study will remain an authoritative account of the Nagas in particular, and of the Assamese, Manipuris, Kacharis, Mikirs, Khasis, Garos, Mizos and other tribes in general, who now inhabit this border territory. The inclusion of map and numerous illustrations has greatly enhanced the utility of the book.

Vashum presents a historical and holistic account of the Nagas’ struggle for their right to self-determination to be independent from India and Myanmar with special reference to India. This work thus mainly covers the Nagas’ old way of life, the emergence of the Naga movement and the later developments till 1999 and the perceptions of the Nagas on self-determination. The author dates back into the remote Naga past traditions and articulates them to the development of the modern Naga national movement.

This study is the outcome of a combination of an inter-disciplinary academic research and personal experiences as the author is a Naga himself and an active social worker. This book is perhaps the only exhaustive and holistic work on the Naga movement that has been furnished so far by any researcher and/or writer. This work, it is hoped, will be most helpful to scholars, policy workers, the Nagas themselves and persons interested in the Naga movement. This study will also be of equal importance to those involved in the area of conflict resolution/management/ transformation/mediation, nationality question, ethnic dynamism and so on.
2.2 PRESENT STUDY

Women’s participation in politics accentuated the spirit of liberalism and egalitarianism, which was evident during the Indian nationalist struggle. Indian women increasingly felt assured that they could use the available opportunities and identity themselves with social, economic and political affairs. In the present context the emancipatory role of the state, feminist and social reformers has been more or less directed towards tradition bound women of Hindus and Muslims of this sub-continent.

Women had participated in satyagrahas since its inception in South Africa. Kasturba Gandhi and the women from Tolstoy and Phoenix farms had joined the men in a satyagraha to protest against the Immigration Regulation Bill and the Three Pound Tax. The presence of women in a satyagraha had mobilized public support, as also the marginal and the apathetic workers to join the movement. Likewise women in India were encouraged to join the satyagraha during the freedom struggle in great numbers, not only to assert their equality with men or their right to be involved in politics but also to dramatize the demand for the independence. A few elite women encouraged by the presence of Annie Besant, had attended political meetings since the beginning of the First World War. The most outstanding of these women were Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant and Bi Amma, the mother of Muhammad Ali. The Home Rule League had established a women’s branch to enable women to meet and discuss political issues without the presence of men. Women had participated in the first major
political satyagraha in India in 1919, but in limited numbers. Small and isolated
groups of women held political meetings in Bombay and Punjab. Annie Besant
and Sarojini Naidu addressed meetings in Bombay to educate women in the
nature of satyagraha, and Kasturba Gandhi and Kamaldevi Chattapadhyay sold
proscribed literature in the streets. In Punjab, Sarladevi Chaudharani organized
women on a political basis.

The women's movement in India was an integral part of the nationalist
politics of Mahatma Gandhi. It was at the same time a product of Gandhi's
activity and involved women in role that were new and diverse, but in this regard,
Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was characterized by certain ambivalence. The
image of the Indian woman as projected at this time was new and revolutionary.
They marched in procession; attended political sessions, went to prison and
conducted Congress meetings. This new freedom, however, was demonstrated
within the conservative and conventional framework. Thus it avoided a
confrontation with the existing presumptions and attitudes of society regarding
sex roles and stereotype images. The lack of confrontation inhibited the
development of a radical interpretation of the status and position of women in
Hindu society.

However the situation in the tribal areas in India has been substantially
different from that of the others. It is pertinent to note here that in the tribal
society organizational principle is quite distinct from the other communities.
Tribal societies to a large extent have not been restrictive towards women.
Naturally, the participation of women in politics in these societies involves an entirely a different pattern. The present study intends to examine this aspect of the problem. But before focusing our attention on the specific objectives of the present inquiry we may do well to remind ourselves that there is a growing concern regarding the status of women in almost every society. This fact has therefore attracted the attention of researchers from different fields.

The present study is an attempt to project an objective understanding of the position of women in Naga society in the context of their participation in politics. Like many other tribes, Nagas are also patrilineal and their men folk play a more decisive role in society. But this does not mean that women are regarded as secondary citizens. It has been asserted that women are very far from being a slave. It is particularly observed in the participation of women at various levels of political activities. Although Naga society is patriarchal but women have not been prevented from participating in these activities. Naturally our intention has been to explore the reasons behind this. Given the broader context an attempt has been made here to study the role of women in the Naga political movements.

2.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

By taking up the role of women in Naga politics the study has examined the participatory role, which is assigned to women in Naga society. In this sense, this is not the study of the status of women per se but it is their participatory role in Naga politics that is the focus of this inquiry. The term Naga politics has been
used here in the context of the Naga Movement launched by the Naga National Council against the Indian State for achieving its political goal. We shall discuss this movement in detail in the next chapter. In the process of the movement the Naga women were also organized under a group called the Naga Women Society. The Naga Women Society was quite active till the signing of the Shillong Accord of the 1975, which is considered to be a landmark in the history of Naga struggle.

The present inquiry has attempted to study the role of the Naga women in politics within the broader framework of this organization. Given this framework the specific objectives of this study are:

1. to trace historically the time and context of the participation of Naga women in Naga political movement,
2. to understand the nature and extent of participation and commitment of women to Naga politics, and
3. to assess the role played by the Naga Women Society in the Naga political movement.

2.4 SOURCES OF DATA

The data for the present study have been collected both through primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through the interview schedule administered on those women who were part of the Naga Women Society and those who were actively engaged in the Naga National movement till 1975. The secondary data were gathered from books, journals, gazetteers and articles in newspapers and other relevant sources.
A sample of 100 women was drawn from the field to analyze the level of their political consciousness and participation in the Naga movement. Two broad categories of women were included in the sample. While 50 respondents were selected from among the members of the Naga National Council Women Society, another 50 respondents were activists of the NNC. The primary difference between these two categories of respondents is that the members of the NNC Women Society acted primarily as facilitators and served as a link between overground and underground activists. But the women activists, on the other hand, were actually the participants in the underground struggles being carried by the underground fighters. Thus it may be said that both categories of women were associated with the NNC political struggle but there was difference among them in the nature and extent of their participation in the struggle. For the convenience, these two groups of respondents have been identified as Women Activists (WA) and Women Members (WM) in the subsequent chapters.
References:


