

## CHAPTER VI

### NAGA WOMEN IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

A generally held view is that women participate less than men in political activities, but there are interested and qualified women, who if given the right opportunity could take on more political responsibilities, than is commonly believed. An important indicator of women's participation in a democratic society is the degree to which they seek and gain public office. An individual contests an election to get into the government and to become an active participant in the decision-making process. Whether one gets elected or not, contesting an election in itself is a very important mode of political participation. Standing for office is the most intense form of political activity. Seeking an elected post invariably takes time, money, and energy, besides exposing the individual to the public eye, a situation that gives rise to its own peculiar stresses and strains (Taper 1976).

Moreover, there seems to be many obstacles that women face when they think of a political career. To quote Short (1996:13-14), "The narrow path leading to a political career is usually risky, grueling and unglamorous, requiring stamina, optimism and dedication as well as considerable resources. These are less available to women than men. Parliamentary careers are facilitated by the resources that certain middle-class occupations offer: flexible working hours, useful political skills, social status and political contacts, all enhanced by what have been termed brokerage occupations. The argument is simple but the insight is important. To run for Parliament an individual must have financial security, public networks, social status, and policy

experiences, technical and social skills. Those who have brokerage jobs - barristers, lecturers, trade union officials, journalists, political researchers, work in fields that are complimentary to politics. Their skills translate between public and private life. Women and members of ethnic minorities are often concentrated in low paying occupations or in small businesses. Such jobs combined with family responsibilities, mean long hours which do not fit in with the demands of political activism". Moreover, "powerful socio-economic, cultural, and institutional barriers seem to have blocked all, except for the most tenacious women, from the public spheres" (Reynolds 1999). Rule briefly sums up the obstacles as "narrow gender roles, restrictive religious doctrines, unequal laws and education, discriminatory socio-economic conditions, male-biased party leaders or other political elites and some voters, and 'women-unfriendly' election systems. Such barriers are typically interrelated and mutually reinforcing (Reynolds 1999). Could these be some reasons as to why very less women actually pursue a political career?

There is no doubt that there are women who have held the highest posts (prime minister or president or chief minister) in their countries though, not a very common trend. What has also been observed is that as one proceeds up both the administrative and elective hierarchies the presence of women declines, until at the very highest levels there are either no women or they are present merely in token numbers. Women politicians whether at the local or national level do not commensurate with their number in society.

Keeping the above stated reasons in mind an attempt will be made to study women who take part in the most intense form of political participation, which is, contesting

for elections, irrespective of whether they won or lost. By understanding the success or failure of women in the political field, it is hoped that it will throw light on women's place in the political arena. So far only 12 women have contested in the past 11 General elections held so far. For the purpose of the study 12 women were taken for case study, out of which three of them are prominent women leaders.

**Case 1:**

**Name: Mrs Rano Mese Shaiza**

**Age : 84**

**Marital status: Widow**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation – Retired teacher and politician**

Mrs Rano Mese Shaiza is the only Naga women who had carved a niche for herself in politics. She is from Khonoma village belonging to Angami community and niece of Lt. Dr A.Z. Phizo the father of Naga Nationalism. She started her career as a school teacher in 1949, Rano Shaiza has a distinction of holding the office of President of the Naga Women's Federation from 1950-1958, which was the pivot for all the women's organizations that time. She contested in the general election for the state legislature in 1970. Later in 1973, she was elected President of the party. As a nominee of the democratic front, the first time she contested from the UDF party (United Democratic Front) in 1977, She won the state's lone Lok Sabha seat in 1977 in United Democratic Front (UDF) defeating over the then sitting Chief Minister Dr Hokishe Sema in the 1977 Lok Sabha elections and worked for two years, five months and one day. She contested again in 1982 in Nagaland Legislative assembly as an Independent candidate but lost in the second attempt.

According to her election was financed by her husband. She said, *“We had nothing and nothing financed me in my winning”*. And relating to funds she commented that there were problems for functioning from the office and even after the election they could not do many things because fund was not enough to maintain.

While asking why she joined politics she said, *“Politics came my way and there is nothing by chance or accident. I was born in an age where the Naga National movement was at its zenth”*

While talking about the relationship with the male officials/ Colleague as a female member her experiences were satisfactory and the men from other parts of the country had pleasant attitude towards in her even though it was first of its kind from Nagaland. *“But in general, it was not easy to be a women MP in Nagaland and from Nagaland during those days (1970s ) because the attitude of people towards politics was male centric. Another problem was communication problem with other politician from other parts of India. But I had no difficulties being a women politician because i was predestined by God and he has not made a mistake”*.

On answering the question to any significant achievements during her tenure in Lok Sabha, she recalled, *“on my first speech to the house, i simply confined it to the actual situation faced by the common people under Emergency and President’s rule and the excesses penetrated by the army and parliamentary forces on the common populace. Women, child and elders were not spared, women were raped, our church desecrated, pregnant women gave birth in concentration camps. As a result the person responsible was immediately removed from Nagaland within 24 hours. Along with the North Eastern MPs, we could form a lobby of Christian parliamentarians to*

*fight against a private members bills introduced by the Lt. O.P.Tyage- on freedom of Religion Bill.”*

She commented on Naga women’s leadership quality and capabilities, she said *“Naga ladies are better than the male counterparts when it comes to dealing with the outside world or people. Non-local and other Indian have respect for the females therefore they are easy co-workers”*. And *“Many winning candidates won with the active participation of women.”*

Her opinion on present Nagaland political scenario, she said, *“We have become too materialistic, a very dangerous trend. It is naked lust for power and finance- for dominance over others”*. Therefore the messages conveyed are, *“Naga women never ever neglect your home and we should start making adjustments for change for the better immediately. We have to move out from our comfort zones”*.

## **Case study 2**

**Name: Chubalemla Jamir**

**Age: 78**

**Marital status: Divorced and Widow**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation - Retired**

Mrs Chubalemla is wife of Late P. Shilu Ao, the first Chief Minister of Nagaland and sister of politician brother late Tsukjemwati Jamir. She is the Recipient of Padme shri Award in Social Work in 1981. After divorcing with her husband, she became more active in politics and contested twice in General Legislative Assembly in 1987 from Arkong Constituency and 2003 from Aonglenden constituency respectively but failed to win in both occasions.

Her Villagers has always been her well wishers and therefore approached her to stand for election in both occasion, and her family supported her throughout. She always had interest in social work and through political arena she wanted to direct that and serve people. Women leadership in politics is something she believes in and said, "I have many visions and plans for our women".

She was fortunate enough to have her dad who could finance her in both the election. But during that time, many criticized "*tetsuer dem senmangthsu ah masu nung kechiba la atema sen indoktsu?*" (Women are even inheritor so why wastes money on her?). There were instances during her campaign for election people demand money in return of their votes for her but she refused and said, "*If you find anything good and potentialities in me, you vote for me. If you not them I am not here to beg for your mere vote*".

Women from Party's women wing and women supporters helped and committed their loyalty towards her in her own constituency. In general women play big role during election in winning a candidate then, "*One regretful thing about our people is they do not know and recognise who can serve them. Rather they look at money. Love of money regulates our people's action.*"

She said, "*asenoki tabotabo jembi youngah Tetsur temji atsu telongi meyiteti, tema nungi asatenerji shiangi ah zungshia mali*" (no matter how much we speak, women are shouting from outside the garden's fence not from inside therefore no body bother's). She wishes to see few Naga women legislator in the assembly to impact the society from a different perspective- women's.

According to her, interaction with other men colleagues and leaders was healthy, they spoke well but acted differently. To question as to whether women would make good political leaders, she believes women are basically honest and have mother instinct from the beginning. Thus women would certainly make a good political leader, though of course she should have experience in the field, be capable of analyzing human relationship and have guts to stand up for what is right. To the question as to whether she had any difficulties getting party ticket, she said, *“at last moment I got the party ticket, though not the particular party I wished to represent but got it. I was intending to contest as an independent candidate but the whole villager’s insisted to opt for another party ticket”*.

To the question of reservation, she was not in favour of it as we wait for that women might missed out on many opportunities therefore genuine interested people should compete with men. She said, *“Women can do wonders only if they join force and act together for a common cause. Only if they show their solidarity they can support win women candidate but in Nagaland mobilization is lacking”*.

After having contested twice and losing on both the occasion, question was asked whether she will contest again or not in future she replied, *“I am 77 years old now but if I am fit and healthy and if God willing why not?”*. She has grown up children, which according to her could be the reason as to why she did not face any problem in fulfilling her family duties.

There were some arguments from other sources and papers regarding Mrs Chubalemla’s experience in election. It was told that she got ticket with much difficulty as the male party leaders and members tried to restrain her from even filing her nomination for the election. They even tried to stop her from entering the office

by blocking the entrance but she managed to enter from another door. After which, when contested Chubalemla was put up by the Nagaland People's Front (NPF) party in the 2003 general assembly election against Mr. S.C.Jamir, a stalwart of the Nagaland political scene. As a three time Chief Minister and the incumbent of the Chief Ministerial office, his influence and hold on the constituency (22 Aonglenden A/C) was unquestionable, and therefore, his winning the election was a forgone conclusion. Predictably, he won the election by a wide margin. Thus, the role of the political parties of Nagaland, which are all manned by male politicians, in fielding women candidates is questionable and unfair and discouragements for women to participate is visible and even when someone comes out and participate, instead of encouraging there are discriminations.

### **Case study 3**

**Name: Akheli Sumi**

**Age: 58**

**Marital status: Married**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation - Homemaker**

Akheli belonged to Sema Naga community and married to An Ao. She contested 2003 Nagaland Legislative election with Congress ticket but she lost in the election.

She faced resistance from party leaders and male members while trying to availing for party ticket at the first place. She said, *"I was threatened by some people so that i will not file nomination. When i refused to be threatened, some tried to offer money in terms of Lakhs in place of party ticket and a very dignified job for me. So I told them a dignified and high profile job will require equivalent degree holder and I am*

*just a social work who is not fit for high profile job*". Her intention for participating in election was to bring changes in the society on which she added "*I had dreams and vision for Naga women and I still have*".

Her husband and relatives and members from the constituency supported her well. To participate and contest in Nagaland election, one needs hug amount of money and her financial support was given by her family only. She has grown up children and dedicated helper, which according to her enabled her to participate in politics without facing any problem in fulfilling her duties.

According to her, there are very limited women in politics due to discouragement from men and political leaders and along with women responsibilities of. She believes in women leadership as by nature women are dedicated and articulated when it comes to their visions and goals.

According to her, there were some misunderstanding and resistances from husband's side for her contesting election at the beginning but it all got sorted out later. She stated that, "*I have had my own terms of politics and every women aspire to contest with men head to head should her own terms of politics and stand. Therefore I stood by that no matter what.*"

While sharing experiences on running for election, campaigns, meeting with voters both men and women, some were not pleasant. According to her, "*women have a very big role in winning a candidate in election. But it is also women who are*

*capable of playing dirty politics. They appear less intimidating and harmless therefore in tense situations where men cannot go and intervene, women has advantage of neutralizing the context. But many misuse this opportunity and they are being used*". There were women who seek party ticket along with her and did not get, therefore they worked against her and created negative scene and hurdle. She observes that there are a number of factors that may affect ones failure or victory in elections. One reason why people do not cast their vote in favour of a particular candidate could be out of jealousy, another could be a candidate's ability to spend time with their electorates which according to her plays a very important role. She also observes that the votes of ignorant people and people who are just after money can be bought very easily and that happens every time in Nagaland.

She is not in favour of 33% reservation policy for women because she believes that women are capable of winning an election on equal round with men only if women get some genuine support from women and men group recognizing their real potential.

In future, she said, *"I am willing to contest election and serve the people if given the right opportunity. I am doing social service in my own limited ability and with my limited resources. If someone is keen on making or bringing change then one should understand that it is not just through political platform"*.

#### **Case study 4**

**Name: Rhakilla**

**Age: 61**

**Marital status: Widow**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation - Homemaker**

Mrs Rhakilla belong to Chang Naga community, she contested in General election in the year 2008 from Sadar II Tuensang Distric as NCP candidate. She lost the election just be a margin of 369 vote against the winning candidate. She is the wife of Late Lukiumong who was the Cabinet Minister (2003) from the same constituency she contested, Sadar II Tuensang. Having been persuaded and convinced by friends and well wishers, against the backdrop of a sudden loss of her husband less than a year ago, she applied for a NCP ticket. Her application was accepted and she was given an opportunity to fight the elections though she lost.

According to her, *“my community and native supported her with full devotion, especially women group. But the situation was such that the winning candidate had strong hold as he already had been the winning candidate from the same constituency in 1998 election”*.

On question regarding role of women and their contribution in election, she said *“women play crucial and effective part in election at every level but the reality is*

*they are yet to be accept in formal bigger platform of politics. Some women give efforts as candidate and more so as supporters and active members but they are just a handful comparing with almost half the total electorates in Nagaland”.*

According to her the leadership quality of women will be good because, *“women are smart, discerning and capable of understanding things if they are made aware and channelize their energy in the right direction but many are unaware of their rights specially those staying in remote villages”.* And *“Without women in politics in real sense, it will be like dish without salt which brings all taste and the dish and side dish together”.*

She notes that she would not have joined politics if she had minor children for she knows that family life would be affected and without her husband around to support her. Moreover her family and people were very supportive in every field of her endeavour.

According to her politics has been a male dominated field for ages and hence marked by low representation of women. Women according to her are so used to such patterns of functioning that they more or less accept this as a reality and hence have very little interest in politics. And many factors responsible for losing the election. It was not because she was a woman but had to do mainly with party rivalry, preference of male candidates and unable to outlook towards women participation in politics in a patriarchal system like Nagaland.

### **Case study 5**

**Name: R.L.Kinghen**

**Age: 71**

**Marital status: Single mother**

**Educational Qualification – M.A**

R.L.Kinghen belong to Lotha Naga community and have contested in Nagaland General election twice in the year 1969 as Independent Candidate and in 1993 from Indian National Congress but could not win the election. She is one of the women pioneer among the Lotha Naga to have achieve Mater Degree. Her interest in social work and women's cause lead her to take up responsibility as the first Nagaland Pradesh Mahila President and served for two consecutive tenure very affectively along with other social works. And when she was serving as the President she contested the election. She is a widow with a child so her involvement in social activities and especially in politics was not much of a burden. At present she is serving the people through a different platform as the NSCN-(IM) Steering Committee Member.

The reason for her contesting election was, *“People had encouraged me with faith and I always had deep conviction that women need a role model not just to look up to but to lead and pave way. Moreover while working with women, the urge to serve and do something for people enhances the interest and broadened my horizon in politics”*.

On answering her experience in both the election, she said, *“In general I would like to sum up that women are not willingly accepted starting from filing of nomination to the very last electionary processes”*. It was told that during election various untoward accidents happened between and among supporters. On the polling day, when they were in the polling station some men assaulted her physically in front of people by scratching her on the face.

While talking about women’s political leadership quality and their future she commented, *“A lady’s loyalty to anything can never be underestimated because she keeps her word. Likewise in political participation Naga ladies act as pillar upon which the rest of establishment and platform is build. Therefore they are indispensable part of any political realm because of what we have seen so far and what women are as they are smart and dependable. ”*.

#### **Case study 6**

**Name: Lochumlo Yanthan**

**Age: 64**

**Marital status: Married**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation - Homemaker**

Lochumlo Yanthan belong to Lotha Naga community and she contested Nagaland General election in the year 1987 as an independent candidate from Bhandari constituency, Wokha district. She remembered being always active in society, women group and especially when other women could not avail their time for politics with the family she worked very hard at home and in party works. She involves keenly as the member of All India Congress Council (AICC) and an active

member of Naga Mother's Association (NMA). Her husband is a retired government Gazetted officer who supported her throughout her election period morally, financially and physically being there.

When asking about her opinion on reservation policy, she replied. *"Just speaking for present scenario it is required otherwise in Nagaland we do not foresee any women politician in future. One can only wish and not fulfil without that. But personally in my opinion I am not in favour of reservation because women are equally blessed with talents"*.

On asking the question about her experience running the election, she explained, *"it was not easy to contest then, because it was just the third election with women candidate in Nagaland. Mentality of having men in political arena and women in domestic field was reflected in many ways. Getting party ticket was another hurdle faced by women from male party leaders therefore out of three women candidates, two of us contested as Independent candidate"*. She said the reservation policy for women in decision making bodies in other state or society will work out but Nagaland might not materialise because of resistance from different angles

The future of Nagaland election can be change only when, *"General electorate and specially women voters should be made aware of their rights and educate the need of having women legislator. It has been more than four decade after attainment of statehood in Nagaland but we have not seen a single women legislator"*.

When she decided to contest her family stood behind her. She feels that women can also do what men can, understand problems better, are not corrupted and are less likely to use unfair means in elections. The Naga women according to her plays important role in the society

and as such should contribute to society even in the political affairs becomes a necessity. She notes that if more educated women of substance and who have good understanding are given a chance in this field, politics would not be regarded as bad or as dirty. As such she feels that there should be reservation of seats for women.

To the question if women would make good political leaders she feels that women certainly can as they are equally capable and sensitive to peoples' daily problems.

But family obligations and a general bias that people have towards women have resulted in their low representation and also becomes the reason for women's failure in the election. Moreover she feels that authority and politics in Naga societies rest completely with men which restricts women from political involvement.

## **Case study 7**

**Name: Mrs Sano Vamuzo**

**Age: 63**

**Marital status: Widow**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation – Nagaland Women commission Chairperson**

Mrs Sano Vamuzo is an Angami Naga and at present the Women Commission Chairperson, Govt. Of Nagaland. She is the wife of late Vamuo, former Chief Minister to the Government of Nagaland. While her husband was the Chief Minister and active politician she remembered instances where she participated as women initiators in support of husband's work, "Whenever my husband and his group went about the places to attend meetings and campaigns, I accompanied them not just as mere wife of minister but as a facilitators and women leader to ". After the demise of her politician husband, she started actively participating in political front helping party and women wings faithfully apart from various involvements in social works.

In the last 2008 Legislative Assembly election in Nagaland, she was all set to contest in the election but denied party ticket at the last moment on the bases that there is no more ticket to spare for her from the party she approached and was intending to represent. According to her, "*As of now, Party functionaries cannot be differentiated whether the party is for people or the people are for party*".

Her personal reason for interest in contesting the election was for the Naga women alone because women are neglected in political arena in Naga society. She said, "*First before anything, our women should be educated and made aware of their*

*rights. At present, general women public is so ignorant that it will time for women's participation in higher level. Women are still in dark and are denied of their political rights because women are ignorant. And Women themselves obstruct their advancement, because women are reluctant to step up and take new steps. Along with the general women electorates, there are some fortunate women among many, to be the wife, mother, relatives or sister of the minister and the politician. These women can play a big role in politics through this virtue. But sadly many of them become complacent and comfortable and materialistic. Many wives do not know what their husbands are doing".*

When she decided to stand for elections her family fully supported her. She has four grown up children and as such was free to join politics. She notes that she would have never joined being a social activist and even being interested in politics had her children are minors because participation in bigger level like election would to some extent affect the family life.

To the question as to whether women would make good political leaders, she notes that they certainly would as Naga women are as efficient as the men and women today are educated and talented. She laments about the low representation of women saying they have not been motivated enough. More women should come forward as there are enough capable women with leadership qualities. According to her the reasons for women losing election in Nagaland is because of men not able to accommodate women and that includes the political party.

Another reason according to her is the system and procedures of Nagaland election scenario.

### **Case study 8**

**Name: Imdanglemla Aier.**

**Age – 68**

**Marital status: Widow**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation – Party leader**

Mrs Imdanglemla is the Widow of Late. Koramoa Jamir, who was a Minister to the Government of Nagaland. She was the second President, Secretary, Vice- President of whole Nagaland Pradesh Mahila for more than 20 year, Chairmen of the Social Welfare Department. At present, she is representing member of All India Congress Council Member (AICC) and keeping herself busy with different social and political activities.

Her experience as wife of politician has been very responsible one. She recalled having her husband and his close friend competing with each other in election. She was the one who took a Cow as gift to husband's Friend and election rival's place just the day before election. There were instances she said, "During and fortnight to election we used to kill pigs, cows and cook food for people. So in the middle of the night, people from neighbouring villages barged into the house in vehicles, demand money and eat food with promise of their votes. They were running for petty tips, food and many drunkards and under age group of people among them but we could not refuse or annoy the voters at that sensitive situation". According to her wife of a

politician plays an important role as women can influence and mould people. She can use her position to influence people and policies through her husband and electorates.

She narrated that, “The problem today in Nagaland politics is that the politician and the party leaders do not know the people from their concern constituency personally or know their situation. They themselves stay outside or in towns not in their constituency. Just before the election they come and distribute money to strangers therefore any strangers take advantage of the money and some take more than one time”.

After her husband’s dead, she herself started to involve in politics through women Mahila group. She always had concern for women’s status and their disadvantage position therefore reaching out to women masses becomes a reality through involving in political party processes. She said, “Men’s party commitment keep changing according to situation and position of the state so as their attitude towards women’s involvement. They encourage women before and during election to involve in electoral process because they are very instrumental in winning. But the same women cannot contest against them. They only encourage women to be active as political supporters and members, not be part of decision making”.

## **Case study 9**

**Name: Temsusola**

**Age: 75**

**Marital status: Married**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation – Retired Headmistress**

Mrs Temsutola is a retired headmistress from Government High School and belongs to Ao Naga community. She is the first president of the most influential women's organization among the Aos, the 'Watsü Mungdang' 1982 and continues to participate as "*there is no retirement in social work specially this organisation*" she said and Convenor of 'Tetsurtem committee' (Women's committee). These two organizations stand for women's cause and their welfare, preserves and document cultural attires, seeks to create political and gender awareness among the women. Mokokchung is one of the populous districts in Nagaland and there are issues like rape, disputes, prohibitions, agitations and sticks often and she has been influential in dealing with all the situations alongside men and against men in many occasions. Someone has commented about her as, "*tetsüitem atema inyakba mapatem nung, la ya Ao tsür rongnung tajungba aser lai amai shiangi menyaker*" (Among the Aos she is the best women leader and any issues related to women she devote herself).

Under her leadership *Watsü Mungdang* even took initiative to go village to village giving awareness about women's rights to both men and women. Emphases were given on women's political participation with reservation and right to inheritance by daughters which are of parents earned property or land. She said, "*When we meet old men in villages they questioned about women's participation in politics saying it has*

*never been that way in Ao administration and customary law therefore it will never will and about reservation it will be impossible. An old man from Mokokchung village said, 'Ann tetsu-i akong dang boh yimti nung shilumanem arur' (when a female chicken (Hen) grows in the village, misfortune and ill-health befalls in the village)".*

When questioned about women's inheritance rights, there seems to have little impact still despite awareness. Their campaign had slogan like, "*Onok bo obala zü agi meyanglu ah na?*" (Are we not made up of daddy's blood?). She recalled a family, when parents died leaving only two daughters they leave properties, land and building they have purchased from their earnings for the two daughters with legal papers and witness. But everything was snatched away by the male inheritors saying it is not in Ao customary law, ignoring all the court and legal procedures.

Therefore she commented that women are being discriminated just because of being a woman. She strongly supported reservation because women claim their own right based on constitution and we should get our due. Women should be given chance first to proof their capabilities than their counterparts will realise what they were missing in the legislation.

### **Case Study: 10**

**Name: Khesilie Chisi**

**Age: 56**

**Marital status: Married**

**Educational Qualification – Graduate**

**Occupation - Homemaker**

Khesheli Sema is the former President of Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) which represents all the women in the state irrespective of tribe. NMA is one of the most active and effective working body working relentlessly for the welfare of the society and especially for Naga women. Under her leadership the association has successfully and actively involved in all fields that concerns welfare of the state. She is a very dedicated and able social leader whose works, expertise and involvement especially among the Naga women have become an indispensable asset to the organization.

To the question on Naga women in electoral politics, she said State *“politics has become very dirty and unfair and women cannot participate in such a scenario. Without man power, money power and political power in Nagaland politics cannot be played. And women do not have them. To participate, contest at present she has to be recognised and reputed by the society. This is one of the reason why women do not elected easily even before”*.

*“In deciding right to vote, women are dominated by men because women are submissive, meek so men take advantage of it. The sad thing is that they are not aware that by giving up this right, they are giving away their future. It holds their future but election for many is like a one-day affair. Women- general public are mostly ignorant and innocent”*.

Therefore according to her, the minds of the women should be liberated through education/ seminar/ trainings and awareness on the rights of women. She is in favour of reservation policy for women because *“when it comes to any other field of work women are at par with men in today’s world. But only in decision making sphere men can control. Men cannot be selfish in keeping the opportunity from women”*.

The study reveals that there are a small number of women (12) aspiring for a political career though none have actually made it. Some of the women candidates have lamented that among others, lack of support and favour from major political parties played a major role in their failure. These women either had families with political backgrounds, or had been doing social work or fighting for the cause of women and eventually getting involved in politics. Another common characteristic feature of these women is that they are all educated, married and above 40 years of age indicating that they, more or less joined active politics somewhere near their forties. Yet another common trait is that these women have no minor children to look after. All have children who are grown-up who are either college going, working or settled down thereby leaving free time for them to pursue other avenues of interest.

During the interview all had agreed that the family was their first priority and that they would not have got involved in politics if they had minor children to look after. As such they all had the support of their family when they decided to stand for elections. Economically, these women came from the middle and upper-middle class families.

These women are all very dynamic and active individuals that one is left to wonder as to why they were not elected. But as some of them noted, financial investment in politics plays a very big role here. Money power, muscle power, besides many other factors have been seen to play a major role in electoral preparations.

Another observation is that among the 10 case studies, 6 were widows and 4 were widows of successful politician husbands. They contested and were involve in political activities after their respective husbands passed away. Their husbands had been elected representatives of their respective constituencies and as their wives, they were well known to the people of the constituency.

Most of these women entered politics due to the encouragement they received from their family members, their neighbours and well wishers of their respective constituencies, the warm response of varies political parties and above all their personal desire and interest to contest the elections. It can also be said that their personal desire and interest were reinforced by the above factors. Women who are active and involved in social work, women who have no minor children to look after, or are wives of politicians, seem to look towards a political career. Moreover, age also seems to play a major role in one's entry into active politics. A common pattern observed here is that women entered into active politics after 40 years of age. This seems to be an indication of the ideal age for women to take up

political offices, a time where one is relatively free from familial responsibilities like reproduction or nursing of children. This indicates that women take their responsibilities as home-makers seriously and are willing to venture out into the political domain only if they are confident that they can strike a balance between familial responsibilities and the demands of active politics. Politics, to these women is an activity undertaken only when they are confident that they are buoyed by financial stability. The various political parties were also influenced by the above factors when it came to the choice of candidates for various constituencies - elderly literate women, lesser degree of family responsibilities, well developed inter-personal relationship, stable income and capability to mobilize people.

Naga women are yet to make their presence felt in the political arena. They are no doubt aware that the pursuit to rigorous politics is unglamorous, requiring untiring effort and self dedication, and the need of inculcating political skills in oratory as well as in their day-to-day association with the electorate. Being women they need to infuse extra effort in sharpening their political skills so as to be taken seriously not only by their male counterparts but by women as well.