

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The political status of women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of political power and in the value given by society to this role of women (Vats 2004:6). Democracy is an inclusive process, and therefore in a functioning democracy, the points of view of different interest groups must be taken into account in formulating any decision. The interest and opinions of men, women, and minorities must be part of that decision-making process. Women constitute half of humanity, and it follows that any decision-making, whether at the personal, family or societal levels, should include and involve the participation of women in the making of those decisions. Women's political, social, and economic rights are an integral and inseparable part of human rights.

The daily lives of women around the world do vary, often because of different constitutional amendments ensuring equal rights, laws eliminating sex discrimination or violence. Yet, globally and historically sex-stereotyped views, norms, and values still prevail. These patterns, and the set of attitudes which underlie them, constituted the heritage of patriarchy which has dominated most of recorded history and remains dominant today (Lynne and Ross 1986). Needless to say that there is no country in the world today, where women have equal status with men in all the major area of life, family, health, reproduction, education, work, government and cultural expression. Although the opportunity for women to be politically active may differ across countries and societies, the causes for active participation are often

similar. Women have to join politics of power both to participate as women and to change the very nature of that power which serves to exclude women. Political participation of women is essential to ensure that the concerns and issues related to women are integrated into mainstream decision-making processes by themselves. Provisions in the constitution of India not only guarantee equality to women but also empower the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the increasing socio-economic disadvantages faced by them over the years.

Political participation varies from country to country and state to state. Political participation means the involvement of individual or the groups in the political activities such as casting votes or participating in the election processes. It also implies people's action which directly and indirectly influences governmental machinery (Nie and Verba 1975). There has been a general consensus that at the more effective levels of political activity the involvement of women is less than men. This disparity is visible in all type of societies and economic and political system. Social scientist in the 1950s and 1960s who drew attention to this phenomenon attempted to explain it in terms of psychological assumptions. Women were said to be more traditional and conservative, to be temperamentally unsuited to masculine style of political activity, to adopt unquestioningly their husband's political allegiances, to be more swayed by candidates than issues, to be more moralistic, more emotional and less politically aware and interested than men (Joni and Jill 1981).

In the present time in many countries there is increased political awareness among women, but their participation in the political process is restricted. Besides structural impediments, the prevalence of patriarchal determined cultural prejudices has also been a major limiting factor for women's participation in politics. Factors such as lack of education, lack of time for politics after performing other responsibilities as housewives and wage-earners, were seen to exemplify these impediments.

The recognition of women's political equality in the Indian Constitution was a radical departure not only from the inherited norms of traditional Indian society, but also from the political norms of most advanced countries at that time (Majumdar 2005). The early 20th century saw the birth of women's organization and the beginning of the demand for political rights. In 1930 a variety of representatives of women's organizations demanded immediate acceptance of adult franchise without sex discrimination. In the case of India, even though this demand was rejected by the government, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 accepted the demand and committed itself to women's political equality regardless of their status and qualification. This promise was redeemed after independence when the Constitution pledged the nation to the principles of equality and dignity of the individual and proclaimed the fundamental rights of women to political and legal equality and guaranteed non-discrimination in employment in office under the state. In order to provide greater opportunities to women to actively participate in the decision making process at the grass-root level, the Government passed the 73rd Amendment act which provided 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions. But these voices and initiatives are actually a poor yardstick to judge the emancipation of women.

Coming to the question of Naga women and their involvement in politics, scholars on Nagas like Hutton (1921a, 1921b), Mills (1922, 1926, 1937), Furer-Haimendorf (1939) and other scholars like Yonuo (1974), Singh (1981), Horam (1975), Channa (1992), Zehol (1998) notes that Naga women traditionally had no direct role at all to play in political matters. They were not even allowed to attend meetings of village councils, address or stand before the village crowd in any kind of meetings.

1.2 Statement of the problem:

Looking back at the last four decades of Nagaland General Assembly elections held so far since the attainment of statehood as the 16th state of India in December 1, 1963, Nagaland has not seen any women candidate elected to the Legislative Assembly in the state. In 1977 Nagaland sent a woman, Mrs. Rano Shaiza to the 6th Lok Sabha to represent the state and again in the 7th Lok Sabha in 1980. Since then, no women have represented the state in either House of Parliament and even in state legislative assembly. Even in the last 2008 election, four (4) women candidates contested and none of them won a seat. While women constitute almost half of the total electorate of around 2 million voters in Nagaland¹, one is left to wonder as to why after four decade of freedom to vote on an equal basis with men besides having equal opportunities to stand for office, Naga women are still struggling for space in the political world.

The need of the hour, as such is to get a better understanding of political participation, aspirations, perceptions and attitude among Naga women; a need to understand and document Naga women's real ideas, attitude and feelings towards politics and all that has to do with its various activities. It will also be appropriate to understand men's attitude towards women's involvement in the political sphere, apart from the stereotypical conception of society which is patriarchal in nature. It will also be prudent to try to find out whether women are aware of their political rights; how far they exercise it and contribute to the whole electoral processes. There can be many variables effecting the participation and attitude of women in general and Naga women per se towards electoral politics like age, marital status, education, occupation, and income. The issue of negligible participation by women not only in the electoral process but also in the larger domain of political opinion and decision- making is critical to the survival of democratic systems and human society in general.

¹According to 2011 census there are a total of 1,980,602 where 1,025,707 are males and 954,895 are females

1.3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In anthropology, early ethnographic studies do not elaborate much on the political status of women except for passing references that women do not play an active political role. It was through the publication of *African Political System* (Fortes and Evans –Pritchard 1940), *The Nuer* (Evans-Pritchard 1940), *The political system of the Anuak* (Evans Pritc 1940), and the *Dynamics of clanship among the Tallensi* (Fortes 1945) that the political perspective in relation to social structure was emphasized and established for the first time. Tallensi social structure enables us to see very clearly how the familial order and the political dimension order are interrelated. Again *The wed of kinship among the Tallensi* (Fortes 1949) and *Kinship and marriage among the Nuer* (Evans-Pritchard 1951) had further demonstrated in their book the dual context of kinship, domestic and politics, and analyzed the interaction between the external and internal constrains upon the kinship relation. Fortes, in his work regard the politico-jural aspects as complementary to the familial aspect of kinship relations “*though jurally validated, and politically implemented, descent group structure is rooted in kinship relations generated within the familial system*” (1969:75).

During the last few decades there has been a rapid increased in the number of specialist in the area of political research. Their studies have revealed that the morphological range of political system is not limited to three types described in *African political system*. The book *Tribes without leader* (Middleton and Tait 1958) show that there are many morphological intermediates between the types described in *African political system*. One intermediate type is that in which political relations between local groups are controlled by the holders of status in age-set and age-grade systems, in whom political authority is vested (Huntingfort 1953a and 1953b Gulliver 1953 Middleton 1953) yet another type include those societies in which political authority is vested in village council and associations, such as the Ibo and Yako

(forde and Jones 1950 forde 1939). In none of these types of uncentralized society is political authority vested in statuses attached to the lineages exclusively.

What social anthropologist call structural analysis began with the study of lineage system in societies where descent is the principle matter as well as the source of individual rights and liability. The political system is generally seen as the widest frameworks of social structure (Fortes 1953 29, Barnes 1971 228). The notion of politics implied in their study is that of 'relations between or within large groups' (Fortes and Evans Pritchard 1940 5-7). This is also followed by political Anthropologist, who has revealed the complex ties that exist between kinship and political system, and has analyzed and developed the theory of their relations. In lineage and stateless societies there is little differentiation between political function and tribal institution. Thus the study of lineage clan organization and its projection in space reveal quite clearly the existence of political relations perceived and articulated in terms of descent principle, outside the narrow framework of kinship. This is not to suggest, however that kinship as a whole possesses political meanings and function, but rather that the internal mechanism of kinship, such as the formation of groups based on unalienable descent, and their external relation generally set up and involve political and journal relations (Das 1993).

Mention may be made about of Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940), Leach (1964), Abraham (1967) and Malinowski (1972) whose comments have been made on political inequality which is based on sex and age, and that it was the men, not the women, who played a major part in war and in maintaining internal order (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940). Other contributor of this book like Gluckman (1940), who studied the Zulu tribe of Africa, simply said that women worked in the field. Richard (1940), who did a study of the Bemba matrilineal tribe, observes that women of the royal family were given equal respect as the royal male member. The mothers were highly respected and honored, taking part in the tribal council. Sisters of chiefs were allowed to rule a few villages. Among the Tallensi, Fortes says

that only the men could succeed the clan offices. Chiefs were found to be the main power behind the political organization and the effective working of political system depends on how they exercise their authorities over the people in African society (Mair 1962).

Though politics has always been regarded as a male prerogative, it was formerly believed that political control by women or matriarchy occurred as a regular stage in the evolution of social organization. This was the view held firmly by most evolutionists. According to them, matrilineal, where descent is traced through the mother, was a very primitive form of organization. Matrilineal, according to them, would lead to matriarchy or concentration of economic, political and ritual power in the hands of women. In their unalienable view of human history, matrilineal would everywhere, ultimately be succeeded by patriarchy, supposedly a higher form of family organization in which women hold a less exalted position (Gibbs 1977). Today, virtually all anthropologists doubt the existence of matriarchies at any phase of cultural evolution.

Power is generally defined as the capacity to influence or control others. Those having power *“can control others through their control over resources, materials, knowledge and ideology which governs both public and private lives and are thus in a position to make decision which benefits themselves. Hence the process of gaining control over the self, ideology and resources which determine power may be termed as empowerment”* (Baltiwalla 1993 7).

Human behaviour is also seen as the result of power and power results from the interplay between individual consciousness and the forces and pressures of external world. Linking behaviour to power is a better understanding of empowerment because of behaviour changes if power relations are changed. Empowerment is therefore a process of redistribution of power within and between families/ societies and process aiming at social equality which can be achieved through disempowering some structures, systems, and institutions (Banerjee 1992 Sharma 1992).

In anthropology the study of politics is devoted to understanding how and why power and authority operate in societies. It studies the politically thinking and acting human being in the community (Claessen 1976). One factor to consider when determining the relationship between power and gender in negotiations is whether societal expectations regarding power differ according to gender. Among the Kachin of Burma, in the total absence of male heirs in the chief lineage, succession passes through a daughter instead of a son, but this was possible only if member of closely related lineages of the same clan agreed (Leach 1964). The first two wives of the early chiefs held prestigious statuses among Nyamwezi, Bantu-speaking people. Besides looking after the household affairs of the chief, they took part in many ceremonies performed by the chiefs. The mothers of the chiefs were also held a high esteem, their function being mainly advisory. Women sometimes held offices, though in the lesser headman-ships, in division of the chiefdom that did not border upon enemy country. Women headmen were counted as male for the purpose of descent (Abrahams 1967). Women as a rule did not join the council, though they did have their own way in many matter and controlled several aspects of tribal life among Trobriand Islanders (Malinowski 1972). Tchambuli females were politically and economically dominant; they were the breadwinners, political leaders and engaged in warfare. Thus Mead's conclusion explains that society can both minimized and exaggerate social and cultural differences between male and females and argues that gender differences are extremely visible from society to society and that it is culture and not biology that determines or limits gender roles (Mead 1977). However, putting Mead's findings as an exception, researches examining the roles that men and women adopt in public and private domains have established that men are more associated with power than women (Eagly 1987 Miller 1976/1986). Politics is essentially an art of acquiring and exercising power- the power to effectively influence the decision making processes and politicize, to reverse the existing situation wherever they are disadvantageous and to bring

about the necessary social changes. Politics is also about power relation, every social arrangement- be it the public, professional sphere or in the private space of domestic sphere, is an instance of power relationships. Thereby whether it is the family, religion, caste, or public institutions, they are all political institution. Their mutual interaction thus becomes a political relationship and hence involves a modicum of power (Kaushik 1997).

The structuring of society into categorical classifications of public and private can, however limit women's opportunities and aspirations. The public and private divide is not fixed but is a model that can be used to reflect on the dynamic nature of gender relations and norms (Eisentein 1979). As a political system from the ancient Greece to the modern times of the 21st century, it has built on the public-private dichotomy and excluded women from citizenship. Women have been kept outside the public domain of politics as most of the political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women fit only for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained that there was no place for women in politics because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives. The public-private divide remains as the foundation of the various forms of world democracies (Phillips 1998, Rai 2000). This is one of the reasons that the normative political theory considered private sphere as non-political and did not make any effort to explore the political nature of the private life.

Therefore, they side lined them and their concerns in its theory and practice (Bathla 1998). It was only the liberal political philosophy of the 19th century that promoted the idea of 'free and rational' individual which was used by suffragists to demand for the right for vote. However, as Rai maintains the conceptual basis of liberal theory is inherently gendered in ways, which perpetuates patterns of patriarchy and ignores gender subordination in both polity and society (Rai 2000). Feminist theorists also challenged the notion of abstract individual in liberal theory and argued it is not a gender-neutral category. This is why despite

women had the right to vote they were not able to impact public policy and could not bring private sphere in the preview of the public.

One factor to consider when determining the relationship between power and gender in negotiations is whether societal expectations regarding power differ according to gender. Much of behavioural political science literature of 1950s and 1960s assumed that men and women were substantially different political beings and that women participated in politics less than men, focused more on personal qualities of candidates and were less interested in and less knowledgeable about politics. One consequence of this asymmetric association with power is that people tend to have different behavioral expectations for men and women. More specifically, men are expected to exercise power to a greater extent than women (Berger, Fisek, Norman & Zelditch, 1977 Deaux & Major, 1987 Porter, Geis, & Jennings, 1983). In addition to affecting the expectations that people have for the behavior of men and women, cultural roles have been shown to influence the degree to which men and women implicitly associate the self with power (Haines, Kray & Farnham, 2002). Given these differences in external expectations and internal associations concerning power, men and women might be expected to exercise power to a differential degree in negotiations. And also the political organization affects the different system of organization existing in the life of the people be that of a simple family or clan or a tribe as a whole (Schapera 1956). Research examining the roles that men and women adopt in public and private domains has established that men are more associated with power than women (Eagly, 1987 Miller, 1976 1986).

Traditional gender roles typically dichotomize women as communal (e.g., nurturing, other-oriented, kind, submissive) and men as agentic² (Chapman 1975 Eagly 1987). Further because gender roles function like social norms, they serve both descriptive and injunctive functions, dictating what men and women '*are*' versus how men and women '*ought to be*'

²e.g., competitive, assertive, independent, task-oriented

respectively (Cialdini and Trost 1998). Observance to these social norms leads to two potential prejudices against women in work contexts (Eagly and Karau 2002). Because of competition at work, specific leadership potential and managerial competency are consistently equated with agentic characteristics embodied in male gender roles. Because masculine qualities as competitiveness, assertiveness, and independence are considered necessary for high performance, evaluators tend to assume that women have less managerial potential because they lack such (Moore 1984 Schein and Mueller 1992 Schein 2001 Eagly and Karau 2002), there is an inherent incongruence between the behaviors expected of competent workers and those expected of typical females. Second, when women do demonstrate success and equal capabilities in masculine domains, they can be evaluated negatively because their behavior is perceived to be counter stereotypic and a violation of injunctive gender norms dictating that women ought to be communal not agentic (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992 Heilman 2001 Heilman et al 2004 Heilman and Okimoto 2007).

The negative social reaction people have towards women engaging in masculine behaviors such as independence and assertiveness has been termed “the backlash effect” (Rudman 1998). There is an intrinsic link between women’s domestic labour with capital accumulation. Leacock further elaborate the same point as “...*the inequalities between men and women could not be understood in isolation from polarizing tend incise of the capitalist mode of production which places the ‘peripheral’ countries of the Third World in a relationship of dependency with the metropolitan centres of the First World. Within an egalitarian world order, so called development could not release women from oppressive social, economic and political institutions; it merely defines ‘new conditions of constraints’*” (Leacock, 1977 320).

Assertive and self-confident women are evaluated more negatively than men who behaved in equivalent ways (Costrich et al 1975 Heilman et al 1989 Butler and Geis 1990), lower likeability ratings can outweigh competency evaluations to the point where a confident, self-promoting woman is actually less likely to be hired despite high competency ratings, simply because she is perceived as socially unattractive (Janoff-Bulman and Wade 1996) and Women are passed up for promotions relative to equally qualified men (Fiske et al 1991 Sonnert and Holton 1996 Lyness and Judiesch 1999 Heilman 2001).

As more attention began to be paid towards women and their role in the society, now women's political role in society has become a much researched topic. It has been found that culture does not reinforced a political image for women and that the media and also the literary heritage reread by every generation tended to create images of women in domestic or perhaps artistic and literary or dramatic, or even politics beyond the mere act of voting (Lane 1959). And women though entitled to vote by law, did not do so, allowing the heads of the family to represent them. The structural restriction on participation imposed upon women (restrictions which were supported by cultural norms) reduced the women's chance of being viewed as powerful as well as their ability to make accurate power attributions (Sertel 1979).

Women's political activity is remarkably similar to those of the males. They vote as frequently as man and that their party identification, like those of men, is a reflection of their socio-economic status rather than sex. But several factors such as social, economic, and demographic variables as well as psychological factors have a differential effect on the voting participation of women. (Baker1980). Along with the social structural, the psycho cultural and behavioral variable affect female inclusion and exclusion (Ross 1983). But Rappoport (1981) argued the relatively low level of female attempts at political persuasion is related to

reluctance of female adult to express attitudes and that this reluctance finds its root in children and adolescent socialization.

The study of 45 countries revealed that though the context of activism was found to be widely varied, issues that engaged women politically were more or less similar across the globe. A common observation made by the various authors is that in no country did women have political status, access, or influence equal to that enjoyed by men (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994).

The low number of women recruited to the parliament and other level of government raised an obvious question as to why their representation is so low. To the question as to why men have, at least so far, almost always dominated the political sphere of life, some have suggested that men's role in warfare gives them the edge in all kinds of political leadership, particularly because they control weapons. Warfare is seen to be related to political power as it clearly affects survival, occurs at a regular basis, and that decision about war may be among the most important kind of politics in most societies (Ember & Ember, 1995).

Another reason is that men move around more than women in the outside world, their activities taking them far away from home while women tended the home, and that they know more about the world and as such are chosen as leaders. Even in known societies with matri-liny and matri-locality, men have dominated political sectors (Fried 1977). Even among the Khasi matrilineal society, women maintains the tradition and the sole inheritance of ancestral property is the youngest daughter (*Ka kadduh*) but authority is shared and mostly vested in the hands of men as shared between a mother's brother and father. This reduces her only as the custodian of the property as the control is vested in the hands of her male matrikin (Nongbri 2008, Mukhim 2009).

In most societies there are widely held beliefs that women lack intelligence, are psychologically weak, emotionally unbalance, illogical and unreliable. Besides cultural prejudices, there are also structural impediments to women's active role in politics. Such structural factors are also seen to occupy a position of priority in determining access to participation (Sertel 1979). Women's lack of education and lack of time for politics after responsibilities as house-wives and wage-earners, etc., exemplify these impediments (Kamalawathie 1990).

The continued male predominance of politics allows a particular and exclusive kind of masculinity to dominate the culture of political organizations (Lovenduski, 1996). Besides these factors other barriers such as - lack of confidence including inexperience in public speaking, or fear of making a fool of themselves, have been cited as important factors that prevented women from putting themselves forward. Analyzing women's participation Joni and Jill (1981) conclude that women in general tend to be more traditional and conservative, that women are temperamentally unsuited to masculine styles of political activity (Norris and Lovenduski 1996).

Political career is usually risky, grueling and often regarded as unglamorous requiring stamina, optimism and dedication as well as considerable resources. And the flexible working hours, useful political skills, social status, and political contact etc. make it difficult for women to fit in with the demand of political activity. A number of other reasons have been given ranging from hard work hours, dedication, political skills, financial security...etc that are required for a political career (Short 1996).

Whatever be the reasons, theories, or assumptions given for the low participation of women in the political field, it cannot be denied that political participation being the hallmark of a democratic set-up, its nature, success and effectiveness largely depends upon the extent to which equal, effective and actual participation is provided by the system to all its citizens. Participation is a pre-requisite and the minimal requirement for a successful democratic political system and without women playing its crucial part it will be impossible to continue functioning.

Political participation is a broad and complex term, expressing itself in various kinds of overt and manifest political activities. It is not confined to the selection of decision-makers only but also to affect their political behavior and hence the societal decisions at large (Jharta 1996). Political participation has also been defined as those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy (McClosky 1968). In clearer terms, the concept of political participation typically include activities like voting, seeking information, discussing and proselytizing, attending meetings, contributing financially and communicating with representatives.

Political Participation is typically grouped into two broad categories: formal electoral participation, on the one hand, and informal, or non-electoral participation, on the other. Formal participation refers to activities undertaken in an electoral arena, including voting, running for office, and involvement in a political party. Informal participation refers to activities undertaken outside of the electoral realm, including involvement in a community organization or interest group, protesting, petitioning, and illegal strikes.

Political participation has variety of ways in which people try to influence the political process (Orum 2010). It also implies people's action which directly and indirectly influences

governmental machinery (Nie and Verba 1975). Politics as a process in which people try to affect the government by taking part in the voting behavior, persuading others to vote, member of any political campaign, keeping oneself informed about politics or by discussing, attending political meetings or rallies, by engaging in solving community problems, etc., (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2008).

It means not only contesting election and making decision, it include the gamut of voluntary activities with bearing on the political process including voting support, communication with legislators, dissemination of political views and opinion among the electorates and other related activities. Participation, therefore, includes tendencies to influence attitude and behaviour of those who have power of decision making.

The lack of sufficient participation of women in politics and at the decision making level are themselves the result of their poor social and domestic status and their exclusion from certain positions and levels of power.

Socio-economic conditions play a significant role in women's legislative recruitment within both long-standing and new democracies. It goes without saying that the social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies (Shvedova 2002). However mere physical participation in the formal political institutions like elections or political parties, social movement or demonstrations is not enough.

As such in order to understand the behavioural process in men and in women as influenced by social relationships we have to mention one of the most important products of socialization- the attitudes. Different researchers have sought to defined attitude in different ways as an attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience,

exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Allport 1935). Or it is an individual's tenancy or predisposition to evaluate an object or a symbol of that object in a certain way and having effective cognitive and behavioural components, i.e., as involving feelings and emotions, beliefs and action (Katz and Stotland 1959).

Thus attitudes are acquired from a number of experiences gradually over a period either consciously or unconsciously. Attitudes may change, be influenced and be standardized in accordance with the social set up an individual lives in, if change does take place, it is gradual and unconscious. In this way an attitude is a developmental state of organism valence created by psychological process exerting a motivational influence upon the responsive behaviour of the individual (Russel 1964). Further attitudes cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from behavior, either from observation of an individual's responses to objects, persons and other verbal expression. Attitudes and values are determined by how people perceive, which in turn tends to be determined by pre-existing patterns of attitudes and values (Lindgren, 1974).

Thus, problem of women in politics is located at different levels of history, tradition, patriarchal political structure and the way democracy works in this country. All political parties discriminate women whether it is in holding high post with the party or even in issuing of tickets in election and women find the political environment not conducive to their participation in politics (Kumari and Kidwai 1998).

Family and education are two important deciding factors on women's participation in politics. These two variables were seen to be significantly related to political participation of women and were considered both a booster as well as a hindrance to their participation in politics. Education was seen to play a vital role in the political efficiency of women. Having a political background and better economic status were seen to have a positive effect on

women's political participation (Jharta 1996). Panda (2002) in her book epitomizes the recent debate on women's political empowerment through reservation. She explores the provision of reservation at two levels, by relating the debates to local and national government, focusing on women's status, cultural impediments and attitudinal deterrents impacting on women's participation in high level political institutions.

This is evidence from the number of studies and researches conducted in order to get a better understanding of women as political actor. Mention may be made of studies undertaken by Shukle (1987), Bhatt and Sharma (1992), Guha (1996), Jharta (1996), Kaushik (1997), Verma (1997), Kumari and Kidwai (1998), and Panda (2002) in different parts of India.

Educationist the most important socialization agent in shaping and transforming the ideas about things connected with political life. Educated individuals vote more than the less educated: they vote more by a sense that vote is their right and notes that the perception of vote dose not solely depends on political knowledge. The political attitudes and belief that the people develop in a society proceed from one generation to another and family influence decreases with the increase in level of education (Shukle 1987)

Political awareness, commitment, and involvement in politics and autonomy in political action and different regions are influenced by various interrelated factors such as the social status of women, their economic position, cultural norms and the overall regional outlook towards women's participation in the wider society. Increasing expenses of election, threats of violence and character assassinations discourage women from active participation in politics and from contesting in election (Bhatt and Sharma 1992, Guha 1996).

Along with the candidate's profile, issues raised by them, their campaigns strategy, their focus on women's issues, voter's responds to women candidate and factors contribute to their success and failure in election (Kaushik 1997, Verma 1997).

Women's role and status all over the world are generally determined by social situations and norms, religious ideologies, eco-system and by class position (Sachidananda 1978), as well as social institution, norms, class position and religion, especially among the tribal women (Narain and Lakshmi 1994).

Traditional tenets confine women to household activities and deprive them of equal opportunities for personal growth and social development (Chatterji 1993). Thus challenging the patriarchal notion in all areas and organizations as it is important to raise the consciousness of both men and women (Chatterji 1989).

Coming closer home, anthropology of women has produced a plethora of cross cultural data which covers the diverse aspects and dimensions of women's life. The emergent ethnographic account and field reports highlighted the wide range of institutionalised roles of women play and differential valuations placed on them. Whatever published on Naga were encountered lack holistic perspective and anthropological insight. Even so called authentic document on Naga by Hutton(1919), Haimendorf (1979) clearly demonstrate a colonial bias and vericentric perspective (Channa 1992:145) . Although they mentioned 'Position of women' the accounts lacked clarity of vision and their own stereotype and bias have seemed to have imposed on explaining women. Naga women contribute very visible to the economy and are the backbone of the household. However, when it comes to participation in politics and in securing property rights, women are often over looked. For example, Hutton remarked, *"The position of women among the Sema is on the whole far from the degradation sometimes alleged of Naga in general (e.g. Assam Census of 1891). women have to work very hard in the fields, but their husbands do the same, and both as daughter, wives, and mothers they are treated with real affection and respect by their parents, their husbands"* (1921:187). Haiemendorf notes *"... many women in civilized part of India may well envy the women of*

Naga Hills, their high status and their free and happy life and if you measure the cultural level of the people by the social position and personal freedom of its women you will think twice before looking down on the Nagas as savage” (1976:101) . Mills wrote “*A Lotha’s wife is by no means a slave or chittel but a very companion*” (1922: 111), “*An Ao woman is very far from being a slave and drudge. Her position is not inferior to that of man. She always has her class behind her*” (1973: 211). Horam “*....every village has a council. It is the principal organ of the village. The members of the council are either elected or appointed. Women do not have the right to be elected as councillors*” (1975:84). Channa remarked, “*women are virtually absent in political domain in the village. in the formal political structure women simply do not exist*” (1992: 164). “*Women have no political power either in the traditional or either in the present society*” (Vitso 2003:76). “*Females have no right to inherit property. Widows are well provided for and girls may receive property as gifts from their parents at the time of their marriage, otherwise they have no legal share*” (Horam 1975:91). “*Ancestral property could not be given to the daughter*” (Zehol 1998: 64). Davis points out that, “*Daughters receives no share in their father’s property*” (1969:81). Smith commented “*All property is inherited in the male line, the daughters receiving no share to carry awat to another sib*” (1925: 59). Vitso commented that, “*rules were more favourable for men as husbands than women as wives, especially where inheritance of properties was concerned*” (2003:80).

Naga women are largely confined to the formation of pressure group or social organizations such as the Naga mother’s Association and various women’s church organizations and welfare committees (Zehol 1998).

In the past, women of achievement acted as ambassadors known as *demi* (among the Chakhesang) or *Pukhreila* (among the Tangkhul), or *nulo* (among the Mao) to resolve conflicts (Zehol 1998:70, Shimreichon 2000:43, Mao 1998: 38).

In headhunting times Naga women were entrusted with taking the head of the deceased back to his/her village to propose a truce. It was prohibited by custom to attack or kill these women. Today this role is recognized as being placed to a limited extent by the Naga Mothers Association and other women's civilian and church organizations, when they interfere in factional violence between different underground groups which have resulted in open shoot-outs and killings.

At the village and church level, women have been active as Deaconesses and prayer group leaders, though none occupy top ranks. All Naga villages have a women's council, which is represented in the women's wing of the Village Development Board (VDB). Twenty percent of a village development fund is kept aside for women's welfare and is directly handled by the women's wing which decides on its expenditure (Zehol 1998).

In India, the state of Nagaland has special constitutional status which allows the various Naga groups to follow their customary law (Article 371-A). In accordance with patriarchal control among the Naga, the immovable ancestral property such as agricultural land and woodland is passed on to male heirs the property reverts to the father. A Naga widow can use the husband's share of ancestral property only as long as she does not remarry. Land tenure system in Nagaland is governed by customary laws and is protected by Article 371A of the Constitution of India. Even after the enactment of the Jhum land Act of 1970, customary law continues to prevail. All ownership rights are recognized by the customary law, which in turn, is protected by Article 371A of the Constitution of India. In recent years, tension has arisen regarding the status of women in view of perceived conflict between customary laws in contrast with what is achievable under Indian civil law.

Scholars have therefore highlighted the fact that Naga women do not take part in activities associated with politics as tradition did not encourage women's participation in these

activities. In the present time though women's participation is not barred, they are yet to make their presence felt in this area of political area.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Naga Society is patriarchal and patrilineal in form. Traditionally, women were debarred from taking part in the political administration. As the society goes through changes, tradition is also not left untouched. At present, women are taking part in political process at the state level though the same cannot be said of their participation at the local level i.e. at the village council which is the traditional political and decision making bodies existing in Naga society. Women till date are not still allowed to be members of the local village council. At the state level it cannot be said that women's participation is any better for women's representation has been abysmally low. Taking these points into view, the objectives of the study are;

1. To analyze the pattern of women's participation in the electoral politics.
2. To find out the major social determinants such as age, marital status, education, occupation and income, which could influence women in their sphere of their political participation.
3. To study the urban Naga women's awareness and participation in electoral Politics.
4. To examine the attitude of both male and female towards women's participation in electoral politics.

METHODS:

The study is empirical and exploratory in nature. It aims to analyze the urban Naga women's perspective of politics and its various activities. For the purpose of the study, Kohima Town has been taken as the locale of the study due to the main reasons that all that comprise the Naga populace will be found here. It also happens to be the capital of Nagaland and the hub of almost all activities, be it educational, political, and centre for all government offices both central and state.

The Constituencies in Kohima district are seven in numbers with 165 polling stations and Kohima town constituency is one of them, with 33 approved polling stations. Greater Kohima includes Kohima Village and Kohima Science College campus area in Jotsoma but the present study area covers only the town area which includes 27 colonies or localities. They are Kohima Town area, Krouliezou, Minister Hill (Old and New), Forest Colony, Jail Colony, Agri Colony, Para Medical, Hospital Colony, New Market, Naga Bazaar, Dak Lane, Choto Bosti, Seikhazou Colony, Bayavü Hill, Government High School Colony, Rokabozou, Keziekie, Porter Lane, Chandmari Colony (Upper and Lower), A.G. Colony (Upper and Lower), Lerie Colony, New Reserve Colony, Mohon Khola, BOC, Dzüvürü, P.R.Hill, Kenuozou Hill Colony (Upper and Lower).

The universe of the study comprises of the Naga women voters enlisted in the electoral roll within the Kohima town. The total women voters in the electoral role from the 2008 general election's voters list within the Kohima town are approximately 28807. It may be mentioned that it was almost impossible and very difficult to cover all the voters from 27 colonies therefore, a total of 400 samples were taken (Female- 240, Male-160). The respondents were classified according to age group, marital status, educational background, occupational status, and income group. Efforts were also made to represent all the major tribes of Nagaland. For the purpose of selecting respondents, Stratified Random Sampling was used. Data was collected with the help of interview schedule, questionnaires, case study and secondary