sources. Views of both male and female electorates were taken. Besides, some women candidates and leaders along with men political leaders that have stood for election were taken for an in-depth case study.

CHAPTER II

FIELD, METHODS AND EXPERIENCES

2.1 Fieldwork

Fieldwork, which can be regarded as the base, includes a highly structured research process. This process ideally starts with the formulation of a problem, and in some cases with a best of hypotheses. This is followed by the identification of the universe and the unit of study. Once this is done, a pilot study of the area chosen and establishment of rapport helps the researcher gain confidence for the main job in the field of data collection. When the researcher is definite that enough information has been gathered from the field, researcher starts analyzing the material at hand. It is true that all events taking place in society cannot be studied at the same time. It is also true that all phenomenons are not visible to sense organ. In these circumstances, an investigator takes help of other techniques of data collection such as interview, case study, schedule, questionnaire, etc. Moreover, all techniques of data collection have some advantages and disadvantages. Hence, an investigator takes help of

more than one technique, when she or he goes to collect data from the field. The researcher ends the work by interpreting it on the basis of theories available and may also announce new ideas and concepts. More often than not, conclusions are arrived at from the analysis of data and are compared with the hypothesis, if there is one.

Field work involves studying the members of a community which gives rise to experiences, reactions, and emotions along the way. Though experiences are not succinctly defined in the usage of methodologies in the field, they do reticently state the influence and connectivity between the respondents' or the community's personalities and methods of study. It rather compliments the means of field study as experiences can lead to the development of valid data. My writing below discusses the experiences I gathered at every stage of my Ph.D. field work and how these helped me comprehend and work better in my pursuit of doing legitimate research.

2.2 Selection of the field area

Beteille (1975:103) rightly pointed out the "every anthropologist knows how difficult it is to find a congenial village to live in and study." When I decided to work in an urban setting for my Ph.D., I was in a dilemma as to which town to select and how to select one and how to go about my field-work.I was searching for a proper village, which contained the aspects I had planned to deal with .My research on the participation of Naga women in electoral politics led me to a study in Kohima town, the capital of Nagaland. There were many doubts and apprehensions at the beginning, being a woman and that too not a resident of Kohima town I had to keep in mind the distance from my home and a place to stay in. But this study area provided me with enough opportunity to study women and their involvement in politics. My study aimed 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 of 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.

I would like to point out here that I am a native of Nagaland and though the research was not conducted in my home town, it was conducted in my community and also my tribal group, the Naga. For me the differences in between these two areas are firstly I am a member but in the second I was not a resident. I was a part of my field area of research by virtue of being Naga. I was a native in a broader sense of the term. Yet I was an outsider in Kohima. This included with it a series of advantages and disadvantages. As a Naga, I was in danger of taking many things for granted which are found in my own society. It was left to me to be completely unbiased and to treat every aspect of Naga society with the same curiosity as I would have had for a study of a different culture. I had to constantly remind myself that I was first a student of social anthropology and a Naga later. Thus people under observation may be taken as the other and this otherness should be used as a methodological framework here for there are various aspects in one's society about which one is completely unaware.

2.3 My host family in Kohima

Before entering the field I already had a host for my entire fieldwork- my *Onü*'s family (father's sister's family/ aunty) who graciously welcomed and host my stay (three fieldwork phrases) therefore I had no problem finding a host. There were four members staying in the house during my fieldwork - the head of the household (uncle/*Oko*), his wife (aunty/*Onü*), their unmarried daughter and Unmarried Son. There were two other siblings, one of whom was married and living in Kohima town.

Living with a family was very useful from the viewpoint of fieldwork. I was able to note a lot of things by simple observation. Furthermore, I was welcomed into the home of the married cousin's place, and through them I was able to meet more families in their colony.

Both my aunty and uncle introduced me to many important people in the town. Uncle was a very well respected person, not only in his neighbourhood but in the whole colony. Being a a member of town colony Panchayat and Church elder in the colony, he was highly respected among the parishioners. He had been working as Chief Engineer in PWD department till his retirement. To my added advantage both Uncle and Aunty got retirement during my stay therefore they could avail their time and rendered help in many ways.

Uncle was also one of my key informants. I learnt things by observing him, by talking to him casually and by interviewing him formally. Most of my discussions with him were during morning and evening meals. Occasionally, I would sit with him, talking about his family, his life, world news, and issues around us.

My cousin sister who is a teacher was a good companion throughout my stay and helped me arrange appointments and introduced me with people. She would take me on all her social visits to her church friends, neighbourhood friends, and colleagues. My cousin brother who was a Youth Evangelist then brought many friends and youth leaders home for cottage fellowships and even for casual dinner. Blending in their company enabled me to collect reliable information and views from them.

2.4 Entry into the field

The trip to Kohima is overnight journey from Shillong to Dimapur by bus and three hours journey from Dimapur by taxi. For many *"entering the field is always difficult and may pose particular challenges for women because of their gender"* (Wolf 1996 :6). However, I did

not face the problems and challenges faced by other ethnographers since I belong to the community I studied. Nevertheless, initially there were some apprehension from my family when I was about to start with my field work in March 2nd 2008, as Nagaland is insurgency-affected area and there were several reports of violent activities by party supporters and rival enmity in relation to the then forth coming 2008 March General election. But my parents were quite relieved at the prospect of my residing at my relative's house and having relatives around to take care of any needs.

Prior to my main fieldwork, for checking and testing the feasibility of methods and procedures selected for later use on a large scale, a pilot study was carried out in the month of November 2007 for a week and then came back to University (Shillong), after which I finalised and presented my synopsis with the supervision of my Thesis Guide. After a short period, subsequently commenced my main and detailed fieldwork in the month of February 2008 because of election session in March 2008(Nagaland General Election) and lasted till February 2010. I came back to Shillong for consultation in midst of my fieldwork for further consultation with my supervisor and for collection of secondary data. I had short visits to the field again afterwards till I got sufficient data to complete my thesis. The main reasons for these visits was to crosscheck the consistency of some of the data collected during the earlier fieldworks while at the same time to also collect more data that were found to be inadequate.

2.5 Rapport establishment

Every ethnographer strives to establish rapport—a good, friendly working relationship based on personal contact—with the hosts (Kottak 2002). Rapport establishment is one of the important aspects of fieldwork. It helps to avoid suspicion, hostility, unfamiliarity and

shyness from the people under study. Once the investigator gained their confidence, the precise information can be expected from them.

During my first visit to the field, my relation with the respondents was established primarily through one of my Chakhesang friend, Ata Kezo who used to be my class mate in M.A. I began my work from the colony where he and his family was residing so as to get respondents known to him and get acquainted me with the work. Interestingly almost everyone I met knew my Chakhesang friend and his family in that colony. The community ties are still strong and people form close-knit groups, despite the apparent changes in economy and religion that have taken place over the last century. It was, in a way, very important for me to have this crucial link with one of the residents. This does not mean that people would not have helped me or talked to me otherwise, yet having this link made it easier for people to understand my presence and my purpose. In the first few weeks I never went into the village without my friend or my cousin sister. This was partially because I did not know the routes well. But it was not difficult to establish rapport with the people. Barring a few, all understood my purpose quite well, and most were appreciative and co-operative.

2.6 Use of native language

As far as the use of native language is concerned, Malinowski has emphasized much on the use of the local dialect while conducting fieldwork. Evans-Pritchard has pointed out that an investigator must spend enough time with the people with whom he is studying and must communicate with them in their own language, He writes *"It is obvious that if the anthropologist is to carry out his work in the conditions I have described, he must learn the native language, and any anthropologist worth his salt will make the learning of it his first task"* (1991 77).

The use of *Nagamese* language though not a native to any tribe but a common language for Naga (mixture of Hindi and Assamese) did not pose any problem for me, as I am a Naga and affluent in *Nagamese* language. But if there were words which were sometimes difficult for me or the respondents to understand, I cleared my doubts by asking friends or elders the meaning. However, Kohima is a town resided by all the different tribes of Naga, communicating with everyone was not easy. All the interviews with old men and women were conducted with the help of interpreters from friends, their children, or grand children.

2.7 Methods:

Every discipline contains methodologies for conducting research, for research helps to build up a "new understanding" with the generation of "new information." Anthropology is no different from other disciplines in this matter. It is one discipline, which is dependent on facts and hence research is considered vital to identify anthropology, in this case as an empirical science. Srivastava writes, *"The process of planning a systematic study to seek probable answers to questions about social and cultural life is designated as social research"* (2004:1).Research is always based on theory, the way a research work can be seen is *"it initiates theory; it reformulates the existing theory; it clarifies the existing theory and it reinforces the existing theory"* (Ghosh 1996:13).In social and cultural anthropology, intensive fieldwork has been recognized as a distinctive method *"Fieldwork more than anything else perhaps, is what today characterizes social anthropology as a mode of inquiry into society and culture"* (Beteille and Madan 1975:1).

I used the standard anthropological methods and techniques for my fieldwork. In the field, I relied on observation, interview, and Case study methods. I also took the help of mechanical devices like Camera and voice recorder.

2.8. Observation:

I simply observed the events. However, observation continued at all times and I learnt many things, which might have been difficult to find through interviews. The daily routine of people *or "the imponderabilia of actual life"* (*ibid.:* 18) as Malinowski calls it, was much better observed first-hand, than reported by anyone else by being there during the election campaign and polling day.

The study of society and social phenomena till the middle of the nineteenth century was made mostly on the basis of speculation, logic, theological thinking, and rational analysis. August Comte, a French philosopher, described these methods as inadequate and insufficient in the study of social life .In 1848, he proposed *positive method* in the field of social research. He maintained that social phenomena should be studied not through logics or theological principle or metaphysical theories but rather in society itself and in the structure of social relations .Comte considered scientific method, called *positivism*, as the most appropriate tool of social research. This new methodology rejected speculation and philosophical approach and focused on gathering empirical data. This develops into *positivistic methodology* by using similar methods as employed by natural sciences. Empirical involves observation of facts or interaction with people.

Comte's positivism (that knowledge can be derived only from sensory experience) was criticized both from within and outside the positivist domain. Within positivism, a branch called *logical positivism* was developed in early twentieth century which claimed that *"science is both logical and also based on observable facts and that the truth of any statement lies in its verification through sensory experience"* (Ahuja 2003:17-19).

Observation enabled me to understand the problem better. To a large extent it also steered me towards collecting reliable information. In order to use this method as a method of data collection, a good rapport was developed with the respondents. I tallied the information I

collected from interview schedule, case study, and literature available with the data collected through observation method whenever possible. There are again certain cases where I need not asked from the interviewee but can collect only by observing. Thus reduces the number of questions asked to the respondents and therefore saves the time of respondents' as well as mine which in turn helped me to get more willing respondents.

2.9. Interview

Apart from several cases, I usually had fixed number of daily appointments and I would prepare set of questions for that interview from the scheduled I prepared before my fieldwork regarding all the aspects on which I had to focus. But though I had a list of questions in my notebook as well as in my mind, on most occasions, depending on whom I was interviewing, I had to frame the questions instantaneously as questions were generate based on the replies of my respondents.

Many a time I conducted unstructured interviews without my notebook. Other researchers have also mentioned that there are times when taping discussions or taking notes is out of question, so they have had to rely on their memory and make summary notes later that day (Macleod 1996:127, Haider 1998 225-26). Casual conversations often yield much more than direct questioning (Nakane 1975: 21) and although this results in a considerable amount of missing information, it yields much more accurate data (Berik 1996:60). Conversations with people while walking on the road, while having tea, or attending social gatherings, were a few such occasions. I used to casually engage people, and I felt that when they talked to me as a friend, and not a researcher, they freely discussed things. As a female researcher, I was able to befriend and talk about many issues mainly to women, but some men also became my good friends and shared thoughts with me.

The unstructured and informal interviews that I conducted can also be referred to as dialogues. A dialogue is one in which the researcher should be prepared to let the researched question them with complete freedom, in a conscious effort to make their relationship egalitarian (Haider 1998:218-219). I was frequently asked numerous questions about my life and research which I never refused to answer .Haider's remark that *"...one must learn to be humble. Then only will one be able to get close to the truth"* (1998: 260) Misra has also remarked that, *"one has to approach the people with most sincere desire to learn from them. Any arrogance and double talk are noted by the people and they react to them appropriately."* (Misra 2003:155) which I absolutely agree with and have experienced. I believe that's the reason in winning people's trust when approached with humility and respect while conducting in-depth interviews. Thus with every interview, I learnt certain new things.

For every formal interview, I took notes and recorded voices that on most occasions I re-read, jotting down the points that I wanted to further inquire in detail. Sometimes, I was unable to write detailed notes that very day so I would write the main ideas in the form of points that I would expand later on. Since I carried my laptop, it was easier for me to type the notes.

2.10. Case study:

Case studies of few women candidate's experiences in election were very helpful in giving me deeper insight into issues pertaining to women's place and status of Naga women in electoral politics so far. Young (1960: 247) describes case study, as *"a comprehensive study of a social unit be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community"*. According to Calhoun (2002:59), case study is *"a research method that engages in the close, detailed examination of a single example or phenomenon." "The method of exploring and analyzing the life of a social unit/entity be it a role-incumbent (person), a family, an institution or a community, is customarily known as case study method. The aim of case study method is to locate or identify the factors that account for the behavior patterns of a given*

unit, and its relationship with the environment. The case data are always gathered with a view to tracing the history of the social factors and forces operative and involved in its surrounding milieu" (Walkinson 2001:257).

2.11 Use of mechanical aids

Some mechanical devices like camera and voice recorders are of immense help in fieldwork. A digital voice recorder became an important device for recording case studies and other information. It enabled me to play and replay whenever needed and further it gave a minute detail. Sometimes, language alone cannot give the complete picture of phenomena or a situation. Photographs prove to be a tremendous help by presenting particular situation in frozen form. Relevant photographs were taken wherever necessary, as it is not humanly possible to visualize each and every detail in the field. Photographs were taken which could give a better insight of things studied and discussed.

2.12 Field diary

Study of diary has become a very important branch of Anthropology. Diary is not only essential to know the society/people under study but also to know about the anthropologist. Various things are jotted down in a field diary, such as; the various problems that one encountered in the field. The kind of new knowledge that is generated in one's mind, what one observed, met, whom to meet and the experiences. Date and hours should be written down. This helps to see the kind of development taking place. Diary keeps memory alive throughout the life. Thus maintenance of field diary became very necessary and helpful.

2.13 Studying my own community

Studying my own community has its advantages and disadvantages. Malinowski, the father of fieldworker emphasized that a researcher should collect data through the medium of native language and researcher should learn their language before undertaking long intensive fieldwork among them. According to him, the goal of all fieldwork is to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of this world or to get inside the native skin. A failure to understand the informants' language may create myriad problems. Thus it is very important to familiarize oneself with the language of the target group. Being from the same community I did not have problem or used interpreter. As I belong to the same community there was no question of suspicious and I gained entry to the town without any difficulty. However drawbacks are present and I had to struggle with it. The worst hindrance that occurred even for me like any other researcher doing his/her own community was during fieldwork I was tempt to take for granted many things present in the community and as a result I almost missed out on some vital information. In course of my fieldwork, there were instances when i started and almost took for granted certain respondent's behaviours, opinion and beliefs   since I too shared the same beliefs and opinions that they do. Another big hindrance was biasness. But I used to bring myself to the right track by reminding myself that I was doing a scientific research and I went on questioning in detail and found things I had no knowledge about.

I believe being a Naga helped my respondents to open themselves up faster than they would have in front of an outsider. Being a woman helped too as various intimate queries were answered comfortably which might not have happened if the researcher was an outsider and a man at that Srinivas (1966: 154) opines that a social scientist "*engaged in the study of his own society enjoys advantages as well as disadvantages, and pedagogically it is very important to ensure that the disadvantages are minimized while the advantages are retained*".

2. 14 Limitations of the study:

This study has focused on a phenomenon that is extensive and contemporary issue i.e. women in electoral politics. Clearly, this represented a challenging task for researcher regardless of the more specific interests that the study may have which was to understand the reasons and causes of lack of participation of Naga women in politics. In this study, has been studied from a rather broad empirical perspective and opinion based from both men and women.

But the current research is subject to at least three limitations. First, the study area selected was Kohima town areas to be representative of the whole Naga tribes due to the fact that Kohima is 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 and due to the main reasons that all that comprise of the Naga populace will be found here. It may be mentioned that it was almost impossible and very difficult to cover all the 14 major tribes of Nagaland from the present study area covering only the town area which includes 27 colonies. The reason being Kohima an urban setting it was difficult to locate and identify individual tribes therefore people belonging to Yimjunger and Khiamniungan could not be represented.

The selection of respondents with 60% women and 40% men respondents keeping in mind representation of all the different variables naturally brings forth another limitation as far as the timings and appointments were concerned. To establish a proper or universal timing best for interview was difficult as in urban settings everyone is engage either with their jobs, business and homemakers were busy with responsibilities at home, school duties and other responsibilities. For most mothers especially working mothers, mornings were occupied with domestic chores and cooking, day time with office works and evenings with either school duty or other social engagements. Both men and women officers were even more difficult to

get appointments and even after prior appointment, I had difficulties meeting them. There were days when I could not even meet any respondents because of several reasons.

Another limiting factor was financial constrains, as the nature of doing urban study involves a lot of expenditures unlike rural/ village study.

2.15 Dilemmas of being a female researcher:

Schenk-Sandbergen (1998: 271-73) says that "*Studies have shown that there are certain advantages of being a woman fieldworker: they are more accessible, person-oriented, communicative, and less threatening than men. However, these very traits make women very vulnerable*". To some extent, these notions were true for my fieldwork as well. But on the downside, being a female fieldworker doing a sensitive study and mostly approaching respondents their views. This positioned myself in a vulnerable situation for most of them to attack or contradict or opposed my attempts. In many instances, in course of interviewing wives or female co-colleagues, few men openly passed comments their outlook on women in politics. Gender too created a problem but not in a frightful manner. Such attempts to garner knowledge when not to be taken seriously on the basis of age and gender were quite tormenting. But valuable information on another day would arouse my spirits again and I got back to my work with renewed enthusiasm.

In the article, *Gender in Field Research*, Schenk-Sandbergen has discussed the common experiences of female fieldworkers in the Indian setting. One of them is that they have less mobility than men and that there is pressure to provide for chaperones and 'protection' (1998: 275-76). Leela Dube, during her first fieldwork among Gond women, went to the field accompanied by a maid-servant and escorted by a peon *(ibid.* 285). Since I did not work in a setting totally alien and a remote place, I did not share all of those experiences. However, I

did experience limitations on my mobility, in the sense that the places/ colonies were not walk-able distances and some were very far off that returning late evening/ at night alone became a limiting factor. Moreover, my fieldwork was carried out during election period, a period well known for all the violence and illegal activities therefore my safety was very important. Those were frustrating moments because it was usually possible for me to conduct lengthy interviews only late in the evening.

2.16 Verification of data

In the process of collecting data, I also came across a variety of materials, some making sense while other mundane. Many a times I was confused with my gathered information. It became a hard task to gain an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of some data. So, in order to verify its accuracy and validity, conjugation of techniques were utilized. I had short visits to the field again till I got sufficient data. The main reasons for these visits was to crosscheck the consistency of some of the data collected during the earlier fieldworks thus, data were rechecked by inquiring informants and observing the consistency and individual variation. I endeavoured to observe behaviour repeatedly at different durations in similar situation. Occasionally, the same informant was asked to relate at a later data with the information given before to check the consistency of the data.

2.17 Analysis of data:

Finally all the secondary and primary data i have assembled over the field works and library work were compiled and analysed in the later stage of my work. All the responds of both women and men were tabulated according to their age, sex, educational qualification, occupation and income group to give conclusive result and data were complemented with

case studies. Analysis of all the findings and data collected in the field as well as through many secondary data were done with the help of supervisor.