POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN NAGALAND: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMARY LAWS AND TRADITIONS.

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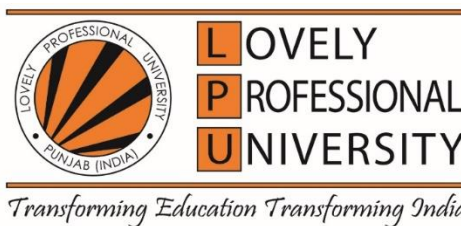
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2025

DECLARATION

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled **"POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN NAGALAND: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMARY LAWS AND TRADITIONS"** in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Nongmaithem Kishorchand Singh working as Asst. Professor in the Department of Political Science of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled **"POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN NAGALAND: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMARY LAWS AND TRADITIONS"** submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Department of Political Science is a research work carried out by Apangjungba (11919251) is bonafide record of his/her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

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Abstract

Background of Study

Nagaland, a state located in Northeast India, has a rich cultural heritage with diverse tribal communities inhabiting its terrain. Since its incorporation as the 16th state of India in 1963, Nagaland has witnessed unique political dynamics influenced by its tribal beliefs and historical background. Despite strides in democratic governance, issues regarding gender representation and political participation persist, particularly concerning women.

Traditionally, Nagaland's political landscape has been male dominated, with men occupying key positions in decision-making bodies and electoral politics. Customary laws and tribal traditions often marginalize women, limiting their involvement in political affairs. Although democratic principles are ingrained in Naga society, the exclusionary practices prevalent in decision-making bodies hinder women's political empowerment and representation.

Understanding the socio-cultural, political, and institutional factors shaping women's political participation in Nagaland is crucial. The influence of customary laws, tribal traditions, and socio-economic conditions on women's engagement in politics necessitates comprehensive analysis. Additionally, exploring the role of women in traditional village councils and their transition into modern political structures offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of gender representation in Nagaland's political sphere.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study in Nagaland is to delve into the intricate factors that influence women's political participation and representation in the state's socio-cultural and political landscape. By conducting a thorough examination of the socio-economic, cultural, and institutional dynamics at play, this research seeks to uncover the underlying challenges hindering women from accessing positions of political power and influence. Specifically, the study aims to dissect the impact of traditional customary laws and tribal traditions on women's political engagement, evaluate the efficacy of

existing policies and legislative frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality, and propose actionable recommendations to encourage greater inclusivity and empowerment of women in Nagaland's political arena. Through this comprehensive analysis, the study endeavors to provide valuable insights for policymakers, civil society organizations, and community leaders to enact meaningful reforms that pave the way for gender-balanced representation and inclusive governance in Nagaland.

Research Design

The present study draws upon both primary data and secondary data to gather comprehensive data and insights into women's political participation in Nagaland. The study focuses on political participations of women. These data are sourced from various authoritative reports, including election commissions report and census reports. Additionally, to supplement the secondary data, a primary survey was conducted using stratified random sampling technique. The survey was carried out for the electorates, political leaders, Women leaders, and Tribal Ngo's.

Findings of the Study

The study explored various aspects of political participation and gender dynamics within Nagaland, shedding light on significant disparities and trends. Across multiple Assembly Elections, gender discrepancies in voting behavior were apparent, with female turnout consistently exceeding that of males, influenced by familial, spousal, and socio-economic factors. Despite high levels of political awareness among women, substantial gaps in political engagement persisted, with men often demonstrating greater interest in politics. Moreover, the influence of customary laws on women's decision-making within Naga society emerged as a notable factor shaping electoral processes and local governance. While there was considerable support for women's inclusion in decision-making bodies, entrenched gender biases and resistance to change were observed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to promote gender equality, challenge stereotypes, and reform customary laws in Nagaland. These efforts are essential to ensure a more inclusive and equitable political landscape where the voices of all community members, particularly women, are heard and valued. Empowering women in decision-making processes is crucial for fostering participatory governance that reflects diverse perspectives and interests. By addressing entrenched gender biases and promoting women's political participation, Nagaland can move towards a more democratic and inclusive society.

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SR. NO.	DESCRIPTION	ABBREVIATION
1	UN	United Nations
2	NNC	Naga National Council
3	NFG	Naga Federal Government
4	NFA	Naga Federal Army
5	NPC	Naga People's convention
6	NEFA	Northeast Frontier Agency
8	NHTA	Naga Hills Tuensang Area
9	NNO	Naga Nationalist Organization
10	NDP	National Democratic Party
11	AGSOP	Agreement for Suspension of Operations
12	SES	Socio Economic Status
13	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
14	HDR	Human Development Report
15	INSTRAW	The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
16	IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
17	UNO	United Nations Organizations

18	CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
19	MDG	Millenium Development Goals
20	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
21	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
22	IWRAW	The International Women's Rights Action Watch
23	GB	Gaon Borah
24	MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
25	VDB	Village Development Block
26	ULB	Urban Local Body
27	KNSK	Konyak Nyupuh Sheko Khong

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Democracy fundamentally rests upon the principle that every citizen possesses the entitlement to engage in the governance of political matters, with each individual's contribution being deemed equally significant. Regarded as a fundamental human entitlement, political participation is imperative to ensure the fulfillment of democratic ideals. Consequently, the active involvement of citizens in political processes is widely recognized as an essential condition for the sustenance of democratic institutions. According to Abraham Lincoln, "democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people". Democracy flourishes in different regions globally, embracing liberty, equality, and fraternity as its fundamental principles. Liberty of an entity as a basic unit of society, equality in diversity to keep up equilibrium within society, and fraternity for resolving conflicts, competitions, and march towards the incorporation of the society. This ideal form of democracy can be created, sustained, and enhanced by voluntary mass involvement in the process of decision-making. When the collective awareness and inclinations of the voting population are translated into political engagement, the democratic framework is fortified, leading to effective implementation extending to the grassroots level. Democracy represents a governmental system in which citizens have the power to make decisions through voting. In a direct democracy, every citizen participates directly in governing and votes on every issue themselves. In a representative democracy, citizens delegate the authority to make decisions on their behalf by electing representatives from among their ranks. Throughout history, political philosophers, tracing back to the era of Aristotle, have regarded broad participation as a catalyst for vitality and innovative dynamism, as well as a safeguard against tyranny, and a mechanism for harnessing collective wisdom. By involving a wide spectrum of individuals in state affairs, participation can cultivate representation that prioritizes principles of equality and dignity. Pateman (1970) has also argued that engaging in political activities promotes a more comprehensive and expansive comprehension of the intricacies within the political framework. This basic assumption emphasis that to maintain a stable democracy public participation must be

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enforced or practiced. In all democratic systems, there exists a pervasive issue of systematic disparities in participation, with gender inequality emerging as a significant factor. This manifests in women exhibiting lower levels of engagement compared to men, thereby implying that the interests of half the population remain inadequately represented.

Human beings are inherently political creatures, and the state represents a political institution. Each member of a state is inherently a political being, and in a modern liberal-democratic society, citizens possess specific political rights that they can exercise through political activities. Verba, Schlozman, & Brady (1995), has defined political participation as an "activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies". Political participation is often stated as the active engagement of individuals or groups in the political process, whether through direct engagement or by contributing to decision-making processes that affect public affairs. Voting stands as just one avenue among several for political participation. Scholars in political science have classified various modes of electoral engagement through which individuals can actively participate in political processes.

The engagement of individuals in politics not only cultivates a sense of connection to the political system but also nurtures a heightened sense of empowerment vis-à-vis elected representatives (Soule and Nairne, 2006). The existence of an engaged population is crucial for maintaining the responsiveness of democratic governance and is recognized as a fundamental democratic principle, as highlighted by Verba (1996). This fundamental premise underscores the significance of public involvement in upholding a resilient democracy. However, across all democratic frameworks, there persists systemic disparities in participation (Lijphart, 1997). Among the foremost contributors to such disparities is gender, with research consistently indicating lower levels of participation among women compared to men, thus underscoring a deficiency in adequately representing the interests of half the population (Schlozman et al., 1994).

The understanding of this participatory disparity gains significance given its potential to perpetuate gender inequalities across various spheres. Gender-based disparities in

political engagement persist as a significant facet of the enduring conundrum within democracy concerning unequal participation (Schlozman et al., 1994). Consequently, persistent and entrenched disparities in participation, marked by entrenched social hierarchies like gender, pose significant hurdles to achieving political fairness and the efficacy of democratic mechanisms (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010). As political participation stands as a cornerstone of democracy and a vehicle for advancing greater parity, gender disparities in political involvement not only reflect but also amplify gender-based inequalities within societies (Verba et al., 1997).

Milbrath (1965) presents a typology of electoral activities categorized as follows: Gladiatorial Activities involve holding public and party offices, candidacy, fundraising, attending strategic meetings, and active party membership. Transitional Activities include attending political meetings or rallies, making monetary contributions, and contacting political officials. Spectator Activities encompass wearing political symbols, attempting to influence others' voting behavior, initiating political discussions, casting votes exposing oneself to political stimuli.

Woodward and Roper (1950) delineate various forms of political activities. Firstly, citizens exercise their civic duty by participating in voting at the polls during elections, thereby shaping the political landscape through their choices. Secondly, individuals may lend their support to pressure groups, aligning with organizations that aim to influence political decisions through concerted efforts such as lobbying or activism. Additionally, citizens actively engage with their elected representatives by personally communicating with legislators, voicing their concerns, and advocating for specific policies or issues. Furthermore, citizens participate in the activities of political parties, contributing to campaigns, attending meetings, and organizing events to further their political objectives. Lastly, Woodward and Roper highlight the significant role of interpersonal communication in spreading political viewpoints among individuals, promotion dialogue and engagement within communities. These diverse forms of political engagement underscore the multifaceted nature of democratic participation and the various avenues through which citizens exert their influence on the political process. In their book "An Introduction to Political Sociology," Rush and Althoff (1971) have outlined a structured hierarchy of political activities, offering a thorough framework that distinguishes between different tiers of political involvement. At the

apex of this hierarchy lies the active holding or pursuit of political or administrative office, indicative of the highest form of political involvement. Following this are active memberships in political and quasi-political organizations, highlighting sustained commitment to collective political action. Passive membership in political organizations denotes a lower level of engagement, while participation in public gatherings and demonstrations signifies an active expression of political voice and agency. Informal political discussions serve as a crucial avenue for civic engagement, promotion the exchange of ideas and viewpoints. General interest in politics reflects a foundational level of civic awareness, preceding the exercise of the fundamental right to vote. Finally, the hierarchy culminates in total apathy towards political affairs, symbolizing complete disengagement from the political process. This hierarchical framework provides a nuanced understanding of the varied manifestations of political participation within society. Their model closely aligns with the framework delineated by Milbrath, with only marginal alterations and adjustments dispersed throughout.

Milbrath (1965) posits that his arrangement entails an inherent logical progression in the trajectory of engaging in political activities, suggesting that individuals engaged at a particular level are inclined to also participate at a "lower" level within the hierarchy. Among electoral activities, voting stands out as the most prevalent in a representative democracy. It is characterized by its simplicity and low demand for information, initiative, and motivation compared to other political engagements. Voting serves as a crucial mechanism that most citizens and is frequently perceived as a direct method of shaping the political landscape. Yet, cultivating a truly participatory culture demands more than just occasional voting. The paradigm of participatory democracy's third wave advocates for the empowerment of all segments of society, including women, with participation in governance viewed as a means to this end (Chakrabarty et al., 2004). Direct and conspicuous involvement serves to enhance the liberties of social groups and hasten their progress. Women's engagement in political spheres symbolizes their influence and standing, while also serving as a prerequisite for shaping future decisions to advance women's rights and development. The insufficient representation of women in politics and decision-making echelons stems from their marginalized social and domestic roles and exclusion from certain positions of authority. Articles I

to III of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1953 stipulate that women should have the right to vote in all elections, be eligible for candidacy in all publicly elected bodies, and hold offices and perform public functions on par with men, devoid of discrimination.

In the culturally diverse region of the Nagas in the state of Nagaland, a predominant characteristic shared among them is the adherence to customary laws. While each tribe exhibits variations in the specifics of their customary practices, a common thread of traditional values and cultural ethos unites them. Customary law serves as a cohesive force, binding the community together. Integral to the identity of the Nagas, customary laws are intricately interwoven with traditional and cultural customs. Particularly in Nagaland, Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution is instrumental in safeguarding the long-standing traditional and cultural systems of the Nagas, offering special rights and provisions for the protection of customary law practices and traditions *(See Annexure II).* In Naga society, despite significant advancements by women across various domains, their traditional participation in formal governance largely persists without alteration. Even amidst apparent modernization, particularly in urban settings, the primary locus of identity remains associated with their ancestral villages, shaping their societal norms and worldview. Regardless of lifestyle diversity, a shared heritage of customary law dictates gender roles, particularly in matters of inheritance and governance (Jamir, 2012).

Within customary legal frameworks, power, status, and resource allocation have historically favoured men, reflecting what Kate Millet (1970) termed as patriarchy. Naga customary law exemplifies this patriarchal structure, which emphasizes male superiority and dominance. Such a legal system is entrenched in discriminatory norms, significantly limiting women's ability to advance and participate equally within society. According to Longkumer (2019) "An indigenous Naga woman is twice subjugated: by the patriarchal society system on the one hand, and on the other, by the stringent tribal laws and customs that restrict her participation in larger social activities by limiting her resources and opportunities." The restriction of access and limited engagement originate from tribal laws and customs, which, ironically, are exclusively formulated and influenced by male members and elders within the community. Due to the roles

assigned to men and women as per the customary law it creates a distinction in terms of sex in the Naga society. Customary laws serve not only to preserve and sustain the socio-cultural traditions of the Nagas but also play a crucial role in safeguarding their resources and identity against external influences. Yet, within customary laws, men hold sole control over both economic resources and political authority (Yanthan, 2023). It thus hampers women to progress equally with men. Since, gender issues have not been taken up at the traditional level, it is important to recon the importance of integrating gender rights from the very traditional level.

Another prevalent feature of Naga Customary judicial system is the institution of Dobhasi. The Word "Dobhasi" is not a Naga word. It is a word coined during the period of British administration. It has Assamese and Hindi origin. It is a name given to a Naga elder who knows two languages i.e., the Naga tribal dialect and the language of the British. He translates the tribal dialect to the British officer and thus he was known as person who knows two languages and hence called "Dobhasi". Gradually this position before the society developed prime importance in both administration and the traditional judiciary practice of the Naga society and ultimately lead to the formal establishment of Dobhasi Customary Court. The Dobhasis are appointed from persons having profound knowledge of custom and usages of his tribe not only as judges of the Customary Court but also an inimitable administrative branch to assist the Deputy Commissioner in the maintenance of law and order in the district. Equality of representation in the Customary Court is maintained by appointing representatives from each village. Therefore, Dobashi court is the custodian of Naga Customary Laws and practise. In the Naga traditional administrative structure every village has village councils and Gaon Bura[1] which functions as judicio-administrative bodies in the villages; and at the sub-division and district level the Dobhasi's plays a very significant

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[1] The term "Gaon Burah" does not originate from an indigenous tribal dialect among the Naga tribes; rather, it derives from a fusion of Hindi and Assamese languages. Within this linguistic context, "gaon" signifies 'village' in Hindi, while "burah," shared in both Assamese and Hindi, connotes 'elderly man.' Consequently, "Gaon Burah" encapsulates the notion of a venerable figure within the village, epitomizing wisdom and erudition.

role performing as a traditional customary court. The Dobhasi's are also a part of the administrative structure of Nagaland as they provide aid and advice to the district administration headed by the Deputy Commissioner on judicial matters. But as per the customary practice no female is recruited in the institution of Dobhasi's court (Longchar, 2018).

1.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Women's Political Engagement: Feminist Outlook

If ensuring parity in political participation between genders is regarded as crucial for the effective functioning of democracy, then there is a pressing need to analyze the challenges and opportunities of women's political engagement through a gender-focused perspective. Feminist principles are grounded in the belief that women face inherent disadvantages compared to men, challenges that are not inherently biological but rather socially constructed and thus subject to change (Bryson, 1993). Advocating for women's rights to participate in decision-making processes has been a foundational demand of the feminist movement at the individual level (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2005). Stokes (2005) argues that feminist political theory sheds light on the marginalization of women within political domains and advocates for their increased participation, portraying their underrepresentation as a deficiency in democratic representation necessitating corrective measures. The eminent philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) played a pivotal role in highlighting the issue of women's suffrage before the House of Commons in 1867. He extensively analyzed women's status and advocated for the societal advantages of granting them complete legal and political equality with men in his seminal work "The Subjection of Women", initially published in 1869 (Bryson, 1993).

The viewpoints expressed by different writers regarding the necessity for equal participation of women in politics reveal a dissatisfaction with women's subordinate roles and a yearning for expanded political opportunities. Andrea Cornwall underscores the adverse effects of feminizing legislatures, emphasizing that strengthening women's

representation in public office constitutes a broader effort to strengthen democracy. This expansive democratic effort prompts feminists to form a distinct political community that addresses gender-based injustices. Recognizing equality and social justice encompasses more than just achieving widespread representation in politics; it also entails democratizing other sectors and institutions, including the private sphere (Cornwall & Goetz, 2005). Bryson (1993) characterizes the feminist movement as a politically motivated endeavor, rooted in historical and cultural contexts, aimed at securing justice for women. The challenges confronted by women in the 1950s may differ from those encountered by women today. Mitchell (1987) observed that early feminists did not necessarily set out to establish a political movement; rather, they aimed to establish female groups for educational and self-betterment objectives, nurturing friendship among women. It's evident that the manifestations of oppression and subjugation vary across different locations, cultures, and historical periods. However, a common thread is feminism's critical observation of the oppression, subordination, and disadvantaged positions of women, which must be confronted and transformed. It's essential to recognize that feminism comprises a diverse spectrum of ideological perspectives and movements, lacking a singular unified ideology. These include liberal, Marxist, radical, socialist, black, and postmodern feminism, each offering distinct approaches and analyses concerning gender equality and women's rights.

Liberal feminists believe that women are rational individuals just like men. They argue that women should have the same legal and political rights and opportunities as men, including the chance to participate in politics. The early foundations of liberal feminism are evident in Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women," penned in 1792. Amidst the initial phase of the French Revolution, women vehemently contested the notion of their social inferiority, asserting their status as rational beings deserving of equal rights. Stokes (2005) suggests that early feminist writers such as Mary Astell and Wollstonecraft primarily championed women's freedom and equality but did not place significant emphasis on political equality. It can be argued that feminism emerges under specific circumstances. Bryson (1993) underscores that contemporary liberal feminism revolves around the principle that women, similar to men, are rational individuals deserving of complete human rights. Consequently,

women should possess the liberty to determine their roles in society and compete on equal footing with men in both political arenas and employment opportunities.

The initial wave of feminism during the 1850s highlighted the unequal treatment of women compared to men in society, advocating for collective action to strengthen their standing. Barbara Burrel noted that this wave focused on securing voting rights for women and called for broad changes in the traditional roles of home and work, alongside greater involvement of women in public affairs (Burrell, 2004). The subsequent wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s aimed to expand women's rights as citizens and redefine the boundaries of the private sphere. Radical feminists from this era argued that identifying male power dynamics was itself a political statement, popularizing the phrase "the personal is the political". This slogan reflected their belief that issues once seen as personal were actually political matters, emphasizing the need for political rights to empower women against oppression. Feminists highlighted how personal experiences were influenced by public factors such as laws, marital status, childcare responsibilities, and the division of labor at home and in the workplace, advocating for political solutions to personal problems (Pateman, 1987). They contended that male dominance extended beyond the public sphere into personal realms like family and sexual relationships, both crucial to patriarchal control (Weedon, 1999). Millet (1969) emphasized the pervasive influence of male dominance in society, penetrating socialization processes and hindering individuals from realizing their full potential. Radical feminists perceived "patriarchy" as the fundamental cause of women's subordinate status, criticizing prevailing theories for their male-centric focus and their inability to challenge entrenched structures within capitalist societies, particularly the gender-based division of labor. They advocated for the cultivation of empowering knowledge rooted in women's personal and political encounters (Weedon, 1999).

Marxist feminists contend that women's oppression originates primarily from class-based societies, asserting that genuine equality can only be attained through the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of true socialism. They argue that the economic hurdles faced by women are inherently tied to sustaining their reliant and subordinate statuses (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). According to Marxist theory, the

emancipation of women is inherently linked to the fight against capitalism, as sexual oppression ultimately serves the interests of the ruling class. Marxist feminists advocate for the elimination of capitalism as a means to achieve women's liberation, attributing women's oppression to the existence of private property, which perpetuates economic inequality, dependency, political instability, and strained social relations between genders (Bryson, 1993). Engels laid the groundwork for Marxist feminism in his analysis of gender oppression in "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State," suggesting that a woman's subordination is a result of societal structures. Betty Friedan's (1963) "The Feminine Mystique," further explores the concept of the "mystique", describing the sense of worthlessness women feel in roles that require financial, intellectual, and emotional dependence on their husbands. From a socialist perspective, class-based societies are viewed as the fundamental source of oppression, exploitation, and dominance, proposing that gender disparity stes from economic influences. In socialist societies, the absence of private property offers the potential for gender equality and women's emancipation.

The discussion on the underlying causes of issues and proposed solutions, as well as the methods of advocacy, indicates a lack of unified ideology among feminists. While their shared goal is to free women from oppression and subordination, feminists hold diverse ideological perspectives.

Contemporary liberal feminists strive to reshape legal and political structures to guarantee women's equitable access to opportunities, thereby attaining parity with men in terms of rights and opportunities. According to Emmanual and John (2010) women, regarded as the originators of humanity, are progressively advancing in their awareness and socio-political status, gaining strength and freedom. Philosopher Alicia Mirayes suggests that women face an incomplete, lacking, and passive type of citizenship because they are unable to meet the four criteria of active citizenship: voting rights, involvement in wealth distribution, and acknowledgment. (International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), 2005).

According to Miles (2002), the inclusion of women in political spheres signifies a significant transformation wherein historically marginalized facets of private life and

reproductive rights gain prominence in public and political discussions. Alexandra Kollantai (1873-1952), renowned as the world's first female cabinet minister, passionately advocated for women's issues, stressing the importance of addressing matters of personal morality often overlooked within Marxist ideology. She argued persuasively that issues surrounding sexuality and family dynamics couldn't be solely addressed through economic reforms but necessitated direct and focused intervention (Bryson, 1993). Tickner (2001) highlighted how political concepts like rights and equality, rooted in the Western liberal tradition, are applied at the international level with a gendered perspective.

Stokes (2005) highlights a notable evolution within feminist discourse on democracy, progressing from a critical examination of democratic theory and practice to a nuanced exploration of participation and, more recently, a reevaluation of representation. This shift underscores the ongoing global debate surrounding women's involvement in politics, a topic of significance both domestically and internationally. The United Nations has been actively engaged in advocating for the rights of women worldwide, evident in its establishment of various conferences and conventions aimed at promoting, safeguarding, and advancing women's rights. The overarching objective of the International Women's Year in 1975 was to elevate the status of women on a global scale. Subsequent World Conferences on Women have consistently addressed issues of gender equality and women's participation in decision-making processes. For instance, the First World Conference in Mexico in 1975 emphasized the importance of achieving full gender equality and eliminating discrimination. The concept was further elucidated during the Second Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, emphasizing that equality extends beyond mere legal recognition and the eradication of discrimination. It also entails guaranteeing equitable opportunities for women to participate in societal advancement, both as beneficiaries and active agents of transformation. Subsequent conferences, including the Third, Fourth, and Fifth World Conferences held in Nairobi (1985), Beijing (1995), and Sydney (2010) respectively, have continued to underscore the imperative of gender equality in political participation and decision-making. These gatherings have tackled numerous dimensions of women's empowerment, encompassing their presence in leadership roles and involvement in decision-making

capacities. They also address the persistent gaps between men and women regarding access to power and influence over decision-making processes across various domains. The principles of gender equality and human rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter find resonance in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

Despite the implementation of legislative measures aimed at safeguarding women's rights in numerous countries, substantial strides remain necessary to realize the envisioned objectives outlined in the United Nations Charter. Emphasized by Emannuel (2010), women have persistently encountered exclusion, neglect, or marginalization in the intricate processes of political structures and global negotiations. The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) of 1995 underscored women's complete involvement in power dynamics as a pivotal area of focus, acknowledging its indispensable integration across all decision-making levels as a fundamental prerequisite for achieving the overarching goals of equality, development, and peace (United Nations, 1995).

The preceding discussion on gender dynamics and democratic viewpoints regarding the examination of political engagement underscores the vital importance of women's participation in politics. The engagement of both genders in political processes not only epitomizes a substantive democracy but also addresses longstanding disparities that have been overlooked for an extended period. Present-day perspectives on political engagement predominantly emphasize representation. Hence, examining political participation through both gender and democratic frameworks is essential for comprehensively elucidating the theoretical underpinnings of women's political involvement.

1.3 Political Participation in Nagaland

The making of the Indian constitution paved the way for legal equality for women. Constitutional provisions and legislative securities subsequently led the women to come out of their private life and thus took part in many public offices both appointed as well as elective. The reservation of 33 Per cent for women in local government and proposal for a similar reservation in the national level or the parliament was thought to bring a massive change in the political standing of women representative in all the different

level from the local bodies to the national level, but it was just an illusion in the reality. Women are still unable to have a strong influence in politics and only women from a strong family line or with strong political family only usually have been able to enter the political mainstream and take part in political decision making. The fundamental right of equality (enshrined under article 14 to 18) and equal right to vote to men and women bring women at par with men when it comes to legal sense. They take part in voting and agitation but lacks behind when it comes to the position of power and decision making. The women of India naturally have an apathetic attitude when it comes to politics. They are less likely to take an interest in politics or take part in political activities or discussions. Women have been brought up in such understanding that politics is a male domain and thus they prefer not to take part in it. The foundational principle of representative democracy, rooted in classical liberalism, emphasizes the inclusive participation of all citizens. According to UN Women as of January 2020, India stands at 142 as per the Per centage of women in parliament where women occupy 14.4 Per cent seats in the lower house and 10.4 Per cent seats in the upper house. The Per centage of women ministers in the parliament stands at 12.5 and is 134 in the ranking (UN Women, 2020).

In the state of Nagaland, there has been a conspicuous and persistent trend of male dominance has characterized the political landscape since its inaugural general elections in 1964, with women's participation and representation in politics remaining notably limited. Consequently, women find themselves marginalized from the pivotal spheres of decision-making, lacking the influence and status afforded to their male counterparts. When it comes to voting women in Nagaland are usually higher in number than their counterpart but when it comes to decision making the representation of women has been very low such is the case that in the state two women were elected to the state legislative assembly of Nagaland for the first time in the year 2023. Women are also not encouraged to be a part of the decision making at the local levels like the village councils and Village Development Board (VDB) as it has been as per the customary laws and traditions of the Nagas through the customary practices differ from a tribe to another excluding women from decision making is seen in uniformity. As per the UN's report "Women in Politics," the factors that influence women's political

participation are socio-economic, cultural, political, institutional factors (UN Women). The statewide opposition for the 33 Per cent reservation for women in urban local body (ULB) election by the tribal bodies in Nagaland (Kundu, 2017) with the argument that it disrupted tribal customary law which is protected under Article 371(A) of the constitution raised the question of gender equality in political participation in the state. It is also imperative to mention that the tribal bodies have no women members in the council does raising the question of their opposition to the reservation for women in the ULB election.

Since time immemorial, democratic principles have been an integral component of Naga politics. Every Naga village functioned as an independent democratic republic. The village council, whose members were chosen from each clan, *Khel*[2], and so forth, oversaw the villages. The council is known by various names according to the tribes to which they belong. Every village in the Naga tribe has some form of village body where the entire village is represented, usually done clan-wise. The methods for electing the council varied from tribe to tribe. (Phom, H 2011).

In Naga village the village council is concerned with the electoral, legislative, administrative, and judicial affairs of the village; it elects the members, makes rules, investigates the welfare of the village, and works for its development. It also takes care of civil and criminal cases of mild nature, but serious cases are usually handed over to the higher authorities or police without any further ado (Horam1988, Das1993). The women in Nagaland thought are not usually considered to be discriminated against same cannot be said when it comes to political participation in the state in matters concerning women being a member of the state legislative assembly as well as various roles in decision-making bodies. The role that the women play when it comes to political participation in the state can be seen distinctly when it comes to women as voters where they are on par with men but apart from the role as voters, the role that women play as members or leaders of various decision-making bodies, as well as various political parties, are not significant enough to be impactful in the society. Where there arises a need to study and to what extent are the women politically aware in the

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[2] In Nagaland, a "khel" designates a delineated area within a village characterized by clear demarcations. Organized along clan affiliations, these khels function as communal habitats, providing living spaces for villagers.

state and also the role that the culture and the traditional practices in the society play in influencing the political participation and activeness of women in the state. Nagaland is a tribal-dominated state where the customary rules and traditions of the people are regarded highly by the people in the society which leads to the customary laws and traditions having a great influence on the people. Customary laws and traditions in the state are known to not favor women when it comes to decision making that is influenced by such practices thus arises the need to analyze the role played by the customary laws and traditions in influencing political participation and activeness in the society. Thus, these factors that influence the political participation and activeness of women in the state need to be determined and analyzed which will give a new understanding and outlook on the issues of women in the state lacking behind when it comes to political participation and political activeness.

1.4 Literature Review

A literature review is a thorough analysis of previous research related to a specific topic, encompassing scholarly articles, books, dissertations, and various relevant source. The literature is crucial as it explains the connection between the proposed research and existing statistical studies, showcasing the originality and significance of the research problem.

Literature can be thematic or chronological or both. In this study the literature review was reviewed under five themes namely Gender and Political Participation, Political participation of women in India, Political participation of women in northeast India, Political participation of women in the state of Nagaland, Customary and cultural practices of the Nagas. And within the themes the review was chronological. The objectives were to identify the gaps and to review the methodology adopted by various authors.

Women and Political Participation.

In his seminal work Simone De Beauvoir (1953) delves into the intricate concept of womanhood and the systemic oppression women face within society. She meticulously argues that women have historically been categorized as "the other," lowered to a

subordinate status in comparison to men across various spheres of life. Beauvoir vehemently asserts that such subjugation isn't inherent to biological disparities between the sexes but rather stems from societal constructs of gender. She sharply observes how societal conditioning molds women to conform to these gender norms, perpetuating their marginalization and oppression. According to De Beauvoir, femininity isn't an innate trait but rather a learned behavior imposed on individuals from a tender age, serving as a tool for social regulation.

Building upon De Beauvoir's exploration, Gabriel A. Almond, and Sidney Verba's groundbreaking work, published in 1963, focuses on scrutinizing the populace's attitudes towards politics and democracy across five nations: the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico. Employing surveys and interviews, the authors meticulously assess citizens' levels of political knowledge, participation, and trust. They suggest that the foundation of a robust participatory political culture is indispensable for the sustenance of democracy. Such countries endowed with a strong political culture tend to harbor stable democratic systems, whereas those lacking such a foundation are prone to instability and authoritarianism. Almond and Verba further elaborate on how various factors, including education, media, and political institutions, contribute to shaping political culture. Their work stands as a cornerstone in the realm of comparative politics, offering invaluable insights into the intricate interplay between political attitudes and democratic frameworks across diverse national contexts.

Carole Pateman's seminal work, "Participation and Democratic Theory" published in 1970, offers a profound exploration of participation within democratic frameworks. The text delves into several core themes, including the paradox of participation, the public/private divide, the gender dimension, reimagining the social contract, the tension between participatory and representative democracy, and the right to political participation. Pateman challenges conventional notions of participation, advocating for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding that addresses power dynamics and inequalities. Her analysis prompts readers to critically reflect on the role of participation in democratic governance, particularly its implications for citizenship, gender equity, and societal inclusion. Pateman's work remains influential in contemporary discussions surrounding democratic theory and political engagement.

Chadha (2014) this paper focuses on advancing women's emancipation through their engagement in politics. Acknowledging the historical oppression and marginalization of women, along with pervasive discriminatory practices, there arises a pressing need for their empowerment, particularly in political and economic spheres. The primary goal of this paper is to advocate for and promote the passage of the Women's Political Reservation Bill. Furthermore, it aims to catalyse efforts to combat corruption, the criminalization of politics, and communalization, while advocating for stricter regulations on election campaign expenses. Additionally, it seeks to foster societal awareness aimed at instilling principles of gender equality and justice. Sindhuja & Murugan (2017) researched the factors affecting the women's political participation and concluded that the detrimental impact of sidelining women from positions of authority and elected roles, asserting that such exclusion undermines the flourishing of democratic principles in public life and stunts societal economic advancement. It contends that political institutions predominantly controlled by men often overlook the promotion of women or issues pertinent to them. Thus, it underscores the critical importance of women themselves taking proactive measures: organizing, mobilizing their networks, articulating their interests to diverse organizations, and advocating for measures that will bolster their representation. Ultimately, it underscores the imperative for women to assertively participate in endeavors aimed at securing their rightful standing in governance and broader society.

Political participation of women in India.

The discourse surrounding the political participation of women in India spans various levels of governance, from grassroots to national politics. Shanker (n.d) offers a thorough examination of this subject, delving into the historical narrative of women's engagement in politics, notably their contributions to the Indian freedom movement and the transformative effects of the women's reservation bill. In addition, Shanker navigates the complexities of the Indian electoral system, shedding light on the challenges inherent in accurately measuring women's political involvement. Moreover, Shanker underscores the necessity of leveraging real-time data to inform policy interventions aimed at enhancing women's participation in politics.

Agnes (2001) provides valuable insights into the intersectionality of gender and law reform, advocating for strategies that safeguard women's rights within India's intricate social and political framework. Gleason's (2001) empirical analysis examines the determinants of political participation, uncovering factors such as income, education, and constituency culture that influence women's engagement in politics. Notably, Gleason highlights the impact of labor force participation and familial obligations, which differ from patterns observed in developed countries like the United States. Furthermore, the article discusses the dearth of government resources allocated to health and education, which also affects women's political participation.

Virginius's (2004) ethnographic exploration sheds light on shifting societal paradigms, particularly concerning tribal women whose social status has evolved amidst rapid cultural and socioeconomic transformations. This nuanced understanding of tribal dynamics underscores the broader implications for women's status and gender relations within Indian society.

Turning to Singla's study (2007), the focus shifts to the participation of elected women members in the Panchayati Raj system in Haryana. Singla acknowledges the strides made in women's participation following the implementation of reservation policies but also identifies persistent challenges, including educational barriers and resistance from entrenched male-dominated structures. Nevertheless, Singla's research underscores the positive outcomes of women's involvement, including heightened attention to critical issues such as healthcare and education, alongside more inclusive decision-making processes.

Shuklas (2007) book delves into the multifaceted status of women in society, with a particular focus on their political participation. Covering a broad spectrum of topics, the book examines the intersection of women with the Indian constitution, law, economy, and global political perspectives. A specific emphasis is placed on Uttar Pradesh's political landscape and the involvement of women in the legislative assembly and council post-independence. The author adopts a behavioral approach to dissecting the political status of women, ultimately advocating for their empowerment. This empowerment, the author contends, is contingent upon various factors, including

socio-economic conditions, prevalent customs and traditions, political systems, culture, socialization, and global and national contexts.

Khanna (2009) addresses the constitutional framework that ostensibly provides women with legal equality, allowing them to transcend the confines of the domestic sphere and enter the predominantly male-dominated political arena. Despite these provisions, the article observes a significant disparity between the de jure and de facto status of women's political participation in India. Khanna categorizes the factors contributing to this gap into three domains: psychological, socio-economic, and political variables. The article concludes that women's participation is not only a matter of justice but also a fundamental requirement for human existence. It emphasizes the significance of not only boosting the representation of women in politics but also guaranteeing that female leaders recognize and adeptly tackle relevant concerns. Embracing their equality and demonstrating confidence in their abilities are deemed essential for catalyzing transformative change in the political landscape. Sharma and Sudarshan (2010) advocate for a holistic examination of the factors facilitating women's meaningful engagement in politics. They propose an analysis that goes beyond the individual attributes and performance of elected female leaders to encompass the communal involvement of village communities. Based on the evolution of a women's movement in Uttarakhand stemming from an environmental education project, the article emphasizes the significance of communal empowerment endeavors. By encouraging communal spaces, reinforcing principles of equality and inclusivity, establishing inter-village networks, and offering mutual support during conflicts, these organizations showcase the potential for impactful political participation. Rai (2011) sheds light on the growing involvement of women in formal politics in India, observing a notable increase in voter turnout and participation in election campaigns. Despite these advancements, women remain under-represented in legislative bodies at both national and state levels, as well as within political parties. Through an analysis of influencing factors, the author highlights differences in women's participation as voters versus campaigners. The conclusion suggests affirmative action measures such as legislative reservations and greater inclusion of women in decision-making roles within political parties and government as vital steps to address this glaring gap in Indian politics. Joshi

(2011) explores the intricate relationship between gender and political participation, particularly focusing on intersectional consciousness in the central Himalayan region. The article delves into gender issues and consciousness in Uttarakhand, examining aspects such as violence, employment, and health. It extensively studies socio-cultural, educational, economic, and ideological identities and their impact on women's political participation and awareness. The conclusion emphasizes the significant influence of factors like caste, education, and economic status on political consciousness and participation. It suggests that women who exhibit a relatively more intersectional political consciousness tend to engage more actively and effectively in gendered discourse within politics. Minch's (2012) paper addresses the broader issue of women's involvement in Indian politics, with a focus on reservations, political mobilization, and participation. Noting that women's representation at the grassroots level stands at a commendable 50 per cent, particularly post the 73rd amendment of 1992, the paper highlights challenges such as the restricted involvement of women in decision-making positions. Despite reservations, women often find themselves relegated to addressing specific women's issues rather than actively participating in politics. The paper concludes by emphasizing that while representation and participation in legislative bodies are crucial, achieving true empowerment and addressing discrimination against women in Indian society requires additional supportive measures beyond mere numerical representation.

Chary (2012) delves into the theoretical and conceptual comprehension of the socio-economic and political obstacles encountered by marginalized communities within society, with a specific emphasis on the impacts of globalization on women. Despite more than six decades of democratic governance, the article highlights the failure of governments and policymakers to translate legal rights into practical rights, perpetuating disparities in society. It underscores the historical exclusion of women from the political arena and decision-making roles within political parties. Additionally, the article examines the interconnection of caste, class, and patriarchy in Indian society, emphasizing the need for a thorough investigation into the barriers hindering women's political participation and empowerment. Prasad and Raj (2012) discuss gender politics through the lens of patriarchy, emphasizing the disproportionate social power granted

to men. They explore how women, despite holding positions of power, remain subject to male dominance and societal expectations. The authors highlight the role of culture, tradition, and religion in perpetuating patriarchy, noting its deep-rooted presence in Indian society. They underscore the interconnectedness of caste, class, and patriarchy, stressing the complexity of gender politics in India.

Agarwal (2014) focuses on the constitutional rights granted to women, particularly highlighting provisions such as Article 14, Article 15, Article 16, and Article 15(3). The article emphasizes women's right to equality and the significance of the 33Per cent reservation of seats for women in panchayats and municipalities. It views this amendment as a significant step toward the socio-economic empowerment of women in India, aiming to eradicate practices derogatory to women's dignity. Pal (2014) discusses the impact of gender quotas on increasing women's representation in politics, advocating for effective political representation to address women's exclusion from political life. The article emphasizes the importance of women's reservation policies in fulfilling their potential and promoting gender equality in political spheres. Roy (2014) provides insights into political participation in a democracy, contrasting it with other systems of government. The book categorizes political participation in various activities and identifies common foundations such as class, communal groups, and political affiliations. It discusses factors influencing political participation, voting behavior, and socio-economic and socio-political factors, offering a comprehensive understanding of political engagement in democratic societies. Kumar et al., (2016) focus on women's involvement in politics in India. They discuss how female voters have been increasingly active in previous general elections and highlight the significant contributions of women to India's nation-building process. The paper also explores the growing participation of women in various fields like business, sports, and entertainment, as well as their increasing representation in government roles. It concludes by emphasizing the crucial role played by Indian women across different sectors in shaping the country's destiny. They have significantly contributed across diverse domains including politics, social activism, advocacy for marginalized communities, championing causes, entrepreneurship, administration, literature, and more. This research paper elucidates their profound influence on the nation's trajectory and their involvement and representation in various political endeavors. Rao (2018)

examines the complex relationship between gender and land ownership in rural India. Rao argues that despite legal reforms granting women the right to inherit the land, social norms, and cultural practices still hinder women from fully exercising these rights. Women face numerous obstacles such as discrimination, lack of awareness about their rights, and limited access to resources. Biswal (2019) studies women's political participation in the Sambalpur district of Odisha, focusing on the structure and function of the Panchayati raj institution. The author analyzes women's role in decision-making processes and their level of awareness about relevant legislation. Despite high voter turnout among women, their active involvement in political activities and candidacy remains low. The author suggests the involvement of various stakeholders to create a supportive environment for women's political participation. It was also found that the degree of political participation as voters among women was very high but saw a steep decline as active supporter of any political party, as a campaigner, and as a candidate. Though awareness and participation were found to be low the political ambition of women was found to be high. Thus, the author suggests the necessity of engaging individuals from diverse sectors, including civil society organizations, non-governmental entities, community-based associations, policymakers, legal experts, and notably, family members, to encourage an inclusive environment for women devoid of barriers. Prasad and Thampi (2021) scrutinize the gender dynamics within Kerala's 2019 general elections and by-elections, delving into the historical participation of women in public political spheres within the state. They analyze the evolving frameworks that shape women's political representation, shedding light on specific challenges encountered by female politicians. These challenges include navigating caste and religious identity politics, which often relegate them to the peripheries of mainstream political discourse.

Political participation of women in northeast India.

Hazarika (2006) conducted a study across three districts of Assam to investigate the involvement of women in local self-governance. The study brought to light a significant lack of awareness and misconceptions surrounding the panchayat raj institution and the implications of the 73rd Amendment. It strongly advocates for the implementation of democratic measures through sensitization training and capacity building, emphasizing

the critical need for both men and women to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the paper underscores the importance of establishing a robust support system for women within society, fostering solidarity among women, strengthening the connections between women's organizations and elected bodies, and educating women about the pivotal role of their participation in the process of decision-making. Lacina (2009) discusses the political landscape of Northeast India, focusing on the prevailing security situation and the center's reliance on localized autocracy to maintain political stability. The article illustrates this reliance through examples such as the Gorkhaland movement in West Bengal and various regional autonomy movements in the region. It underscores how the center's strategy of supporting local autocratic leaders has become a common governance pattern in the Northeast. The discussion also addresses the potential long-term political consequences of this approach.

Mahanta and Nayak (2013) analyze gender inequality in Northeast India based on secondary data and various indicators. While the region surpasses the national average in terms of gender equality, the research exposes enduring gender gaps. Despite the presence of ethnic groups that generally reject sex discrimination, women in the region still face relative disempowerment and lower social status compared to men. Gender gaps exist in access to education, employment, and health, with significant disparities in political participation, literacy rates, infant mortality, and sex ratio at both state and national levels. Hussain (2003) endeavors to tackle the multifaceted issues and obstacles confronting the northeastern states of India in governance, particularly addressing prevalent insurgency and arms rebellions across the region. The article aims to present a comprehensive overview of the political landscape in Northeast India, delving into the complexities of governance and its interconnection with electoral processes. Deka (2014) lays out a framework for engaging in feminist research within Northeast India, focusing specifically on the Brahmaputra valley. The author acknowledges the diversity of gender meanings across various societies and underscores the disparities in class, culture, and society. Additionally, Deka (2014) highlights the historical oversight in documenting women's experiences and endeavors

to identify women's agency across social, legal, and economic spheres, aiming to contribute to the underexplored field of women's studies in Northeast India.

Borah (2015) examines the involvement of women in political activities in Northeast India, particularly concentrating on Assam. The paper underscores the significance of women's involvement in politics and aims to analyze their participation in elections compared to men. Despite observing an increase in women's participation, the study reveals a slow rate of progress that falls short of expectations. Gangte (2016) delves into the complex interplay between gender dynamic and customary law within the Mizo tribe of Northeast India. The study investigates how gender roles and norms are influenced by customary laws and practices within the tribe, emphasizing their impact on women's rights, resource accessibility, and involvement in decision-making processes. Furthermore, Gangte discusses the challenges women encounter in challenging and reforming these customary laws and practices, providing a comprehensive analysis of the intersection between gender dynamics and customary law within the Mizo tribe. Bshmi (2017) endeavors to provide a nuanced perspective on the portrayal of women in Northeast India, acknowledging the contested nature of the region and its vast geographical expanse. The paper takes a bird's-eye view to shed light on some of the key challenges confronted by women in the area, aiming to offer insights from a broader lens. Brara (2017) similarly aims to explore the experiences of women in Northeast India, with a focus on Manipur and Nagaland. The study delves deeply into the hurdles and prospects encountered by women in these states, particularly highlighting the roles of two influential women's organizations. It emphasizes the need to challenge prevailing patriarchal ideologies and redefine perceptions of femininity and masculinity within the unique socio-cultural context of the Northeast region.

Political participation of women in the state of Nagaland.

Shimray (2002) sheds light on the significant role played by women in Naga society, particularly in combating various social challenges accompanying modernization. Vitso (2003) concludes that customary laws wield considerable influence over family, marriage, and kinship systems in Nagaland. Contrary to popular belief, these laws demonstrate a degree of flexibility and adaptation over time, albeit with a bias favoring

men over women. Amer (2009) analyzes the political awareness and participation of Naga women, focusing on their knowledge of politics, media exposure, and engagement in political discussions. The findings suggest moderate political awareness among women, influenced by their interest in politics, media consumption habits, and frequency of political discourse. However, the impact of political awareness on their electoral participation remains limited. Jamir (2012) explores the electoral participation of Naga women in Kohima, Nagaland's capital. The study unveils that although numerous women acknowledge their voting privileges and prioritize the competence of candidates over party associations, political parties hesitate to nominate female candidates. Naga women's attitudes toward politics reflect a mix of distrust and disillusionment, stemming from politicians unfulfilled promises. Despite this uncertainty, there is a growing desire among women to see increased female participation in politics. The author emphasizes the need for societal support and women's empowerment to break down barriers hindering women's involvement in politics. Amer (2013) delves into the political landscape of Nagaland, examining the roles of women as voters and candidates and comparing their participation with that of men. Despite efforts to study their behaviors, the author concludes that the political status of women remains stagnant, largely influenced by societal perceptions of women in political roles. Amer (2014) provides insights into Naga's political struggles, tracing their resistance against British colonial rule and subsequent challenges with the Indian government post-independence. The paper discusses the evolution of Naga politics, marked by ideological ambiguities and electoral malpractices, including proxy voting, intimidation, and violence, often influenced by insurgent groups. Ojha (2014) explores the status of women across various fields in Nagaland, highlighting their significant involvement in society except in the state legislative assembly. The author underscores the importance of women's participation in politics, noting their marginalization by societal norms and political parties' reluctance to endorse or support female candidates. Despite progress in education, women continue to face hurdles and discouragement, necessitating a greater focus on uplifting women in Nagaland's political arena. Panmei (2015), in her study, investigates the political position of Rongmei Naga women, highlighting the impact of traditional customs and norms on their engagement in social and political realms. She discusses the challenges faced by Rongmei women in

decision-making processes, attributed to societal traditions favoring men. Despite their contributions, Rongmei women often find themselves in inferior positions within their community's political landscape. Wouters (2014) examines the February 2013 assembly elections in Nagaland, challenging conventional assessments that focus solely on electoral shortcomings. Instead, he advocates for a more culturally embedded understanding of Nagaland's electoral processes, emphasizing the incongruence between modern democracy and traditional Naga polities. The article sheds light on how various Naga tribes adapted democracy to fit their cultural contexts. In another work, Wouters (2015) offers an ethnographic exploration of modern democracy in Nagaland, focusing on the unique political dynamics within this small, hilly, and tribal state. By analyzing key events leading up to the 2013 State Elections in a Chakhesang Naga village, the article delves into the distinct conceptions of politics and the politics in Naga society, highlighting the complexities of democratic practice in this cultural context.

Sumi (2015) provides a detailed exploration of the emergence of regional political parties in Nagaland, highlighting the complex interplay of historical Naga political issues with the Indian government. The author meticulously examines the factors driving the formation of these parties and evaluates their impact on the state's political landscape. Despite criticism for encouraging tribalism and corruption, regional parties have played a pivotal role in promoting peace and addressing Nagaland's unique political challenges. Deininger K., Jin S., Nagarajan H.K., and Xia F. (2015) contribute valuable insights by analyzing the effects of political quotas for females in India over a 15-year period. Their comprehensive study reveals a nuanced understanding of how gender quotas influence women's political participation, accountability, and contribution to public goods. Kuotsu (2016) explores the gender disparity in political engagement among voters in Nagaland, revealing the diverse social and cultural influences that limit women's participation in electoral processes beyond merely casting votes. Meanwhile, Kikon's (2017) exploration of the debate on gender equality in Naga society sheds light on the intricate dynamics between customary practices and women's roles in shaping the socio-political landscape. By emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives within Naga society, Kikon underscores the complexities inherent in addressing gender equality issues in the region. Together, these studies

provide valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities surrounding women's political participation in Nagaland. Hausing (2017) delves into the complexities surrounding the purported attempts to implement 33Per cent reservation for women in Nagaland's urban local bodies. The article critically analyzes the notion of "equality as tradition" within the supposedly egalitarian Naga society, highlighting how patriarchal structures pervade governmental and judicial decision-making processes. Despite claims of equality, women continue to face obstacles in achieving equal participation and meaningful representation. Longkumer and Bokth (2021) provides a comprehensive examination of the challenges faced by Ao women across various domains. The author explores issues such as patriarchy, customary laws, cultural practices like *Arichu[3]*, and women's involvement in both local and modern politics. Through this analysis, the article sheds light on the systemic barriers that hinder the inclusion of women in decision-making bodies at all levels of society. De (2017) situates women's issues within the feminist discourse and explores the gender implications of customary law in Northeast India's ethnographic landscape. By discussing anthropological jurisprudence and indigenous feminism, the author underscores the need for transformative change in customary laws to empower women and promote gender equality in the region. Khiamniungan (2018) paints a vivid picture of the patriarchal structures and male-dominated institutions that constrain Naga women from realizing their full political potential. The article examines the resistance against the 33Per cent reservation for women in ULB elections, citing opposition from male-dominated tribal bodies who argue against the amendment on grounds of conflicting with Naga customary practices. Despite legal provisions, entrenched gender norms continue to impede women's political participation in Nagaland. Ao (2019) delves into the historical governance, administration, and judicial systems of the Naga territory, from pre-British occupation to colonial rule and post-independence. It explores the legal history of India, customary courts, civil and criminal justice administration, advocating for the codification of tribal customs, and the establishment of a common inter-tribal code. Longkumer (2019) examines the perceived freedom and privileges of Naga women within a patriarchal framework, challenging the notion of

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[3] Arichu was the male dormitory of the Ao Naga Tribe. All young male members of the village who had attained the age of adolescence were to become a member of the Arichu.

universalized privilege due to caste and class divisions. Despite potential advantages compared to counterparts in India, Naga women still contend with patriarchal constraints, raising questions about true equality. Nukshirenla and Dhanaraju (2021) discuss the patrilineal and patriarchal nature of Naga society, particularly focusing on the status of Ao Naga women and their limited involvement in decision-making processes. The paper sheds light on the political inactivity of women within Naga society. Jamir's (2018) study analyzes the impact of Naga customary laws on women's decision-making roles. Examining two Naga tribes, the study highlights the entrenched patriarchal mindset that perpetuates traditional gender roles. Jamir calls for a shift in societal attitudes, advocating for the codification of customary laws with modifications to empower women, including their participation in village-level decision-making processes and leadership roles within Naga Hoho. Phom's study (2011) conducts a comparative analysis of traditional and modern electoral systems in Nagaland, aiming to assess their impact on Naga society. The author argues that the current electoral system does more harm than good, particularly in restricting women's roles in politics and decision-making processes within village structures. By comparing the traditional and modern systems, the study highlights disparities and assesses their compatibility with Naga societal norms. Ultimately, Phom concludes that the traditional political system aligns better with the needs of the Naga people. In proposing electoral reforms, the author suggests either reforming the existing system to address its flaws or revitalizing the traditional system to better serve the interests of the Naga community.

Customary and Traditional Practices of the Nagas:

The customary and traditional practices of the Nagas are explored through various works, shedding light on their traditional laws, societal structures, and gender dynamics. Ao (1980) delves into the customary laws of the Ao tribes in Nagaland, detailing aspects such as the village system, social organization, land tenure, and gender roles, were decision-making traditionally rests with men. It provides insights into the nature of roles played by men and women in Ao society, emphasizing the attribution of decision-making to the male population by customary laws. Similarly, Aye and Sangtam's (2018) paper examines Sumi tribal customs, focusing on the role of the tribal

chief in village administration. Despite changes in leadership dynamics, the study highlights the enduring influence of traditional values in Sumi society. It also explores factors leading to changes in the administration system, noting the retention of traditional structures and values, particularly regarding chieftainship, within Sumi villages. Conversely, Hausing's (2017) article critiques attempts to introduce gender quotas in Nagaland's urban local bodies, challenging the presumption of "equality as tradition" in Naga society. The article examines the patriarchal nature of decision-making processes employed by the Government of Nagaland and the judiciary, emphasizing the lack of equal participation and meaningful representation for women. Dr. John Mao's scholarly inquiry delves into the status of women within tribal societies in Nagaland, spanning historical and contemporary contexts. He examines the roles of tribal women, both traditional and modern, in political and educational domains. Mao concludes that education emerges as the linchpin for women's societal advancement within tribal settings, asserting its pivotal role in promoting transformative change and heightened agency.

Mhathung Tungoe examines the status of women in Lotha society, focusing on social, economic, and religious aspects. Despite historical norms of female subordination, Tungoe observes a shifting landscape where educational and economic advancements contribute to an improved status for women. However, traditional gender roles still influence societal expectations, albeit with some women finding greater agency and opportunities for advancement.

Yanthan's (2023) study delves into the gender biases entrenched within the customary legal frameworks of the Nagas, a culturally diverse community situated in India's North-eastern region. The research underscores the historical prevalence of male-centric customary laws among the Nagas, wherein power, status, and resources traditionally favor men, impeding women's societal advancement and equality. Through a critical lens, the paper scrutinizes the gender implications inherent in Naga customary practices, elucidating how certain symbolic functions perpetuate notions of male supremacy, thereby perpetuating the marginalization of women. Moreover, the study advocates for a feminist constructivist approach to cultural interpretation as a means to reconcile the conflict between gender rights and traditional legal norms. It emphasizes the imperative of engaging with customary laws to safeguard women's

rights, proposing a collaborative framework involving traditional leaders, women activists, governmental bodies, and civil society to encourage gender equality and justice within Naga society. In conclusion, the paper underscores the necessity of integrating gender perspectives into customary practices, urging a reinterpretation of traditional laws to adapt to contemporary needs and ensure the holistic welfare of the community.

Shupao (2019) examines the contemporary relevance of Naga customary laws within the Chakhesang Tribe of Nagaland, India. The study explores their role in cultivating community cohesion and addressing present societal challenges, alongside a comparative analysis of traditional and modern administrative systems. By scrutinizing Zhavame Village's administrative framework, the paper highlights the roles of key figures like the Muvu (village chief) and Zhosuchume (feast of merit givers). It analyzes various aspects of customary laws, including family, marriage, inheritance, divorce, child custody, injury, death, women's status, and land disputes. Key findings stress the importance of preserving traditional legal norms, the evolving status of women, and community satisfaction with justice under customary laws. The paper concludes by underscoring the enduring significance of customary laws in maintaining societal harmony, despite influences from Christianity and Westernization.

Fernandes and Barbora (2002) argue that although tribal societies in Northeast India portray women as relatively autonomous in everyday life, customary legal structures frequently reinforce patriarchal norms that limit their formal rights. However, their study also highlights that women, despite lacking formal political authority, often assume informal leadership roles that are central to the social and cultural stability of their communities.

One of the most prominent illustrations of women's informal leadership is the work of the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA), established in 1984. The NMA has played a critical role in mediating conflict, facilitating peacebuilding efforts, and advocating for demilitarization during periods of unrest in Nagaland. Although the NMA operates outside formal political institutions, its influence underscores the capacity of culturally sanctioned women's organizations to serve as agents of conflict resolution and social harmony (Feminism in India, 2022).

Ethnographic contributions, such as Singh's (2008) People of India: Nagaland, further corroborate the presence of female agency within traditional Naga communities. The volume documents women's participation in rituals, festivals, and village-level decision-making processes, demonstrating how cultural engagement often functions as a platform for leadership and societal recognition. These roles, though informal, are deeply embedded in the social fabric and are instrumental in shaping collective community life.

Hazarika (2015) also emphasizes the role of women in peacebuilding through his analysis of the Naga peace process. He contends that while women may be excluded from official negotiations, their informal contributions grounded in cultural legitimacy and local trust have been pivotal in promoting dialogue and reconciliation. These interventions point to a form of political agency that operates outside institutionalized channels but remains critical to social transformation.

Lastly, Easterine Kire's book offers a comprehensive historical narrative of Naga tribes, tracing their origins, migration narratives, village histories, societal struggles, and contemporary transformations. These works collectively provide valuable insights into the rich cultural heritage and societal structures of the Nagas, while also highlighting ongoing challenges and debates surrounding tradition and modernity in Naga society.

1.5 Research Gaps

The examination of existing literature underscores the pressing need to investigate the intersection of women's political participation with Nagaland's distinctive cultural fabric, traditional norms, and customary laws. While previous research identifies overarching barriers to women's political involvement such as societal attitudes and patriarchal systems, there is a notable absence of focused inquiry into how these factors intersect with the intricate cultural landscape of Nagaland. The state, characterized by its tribal dominance, deeply ingrained customs, and traditional governance structures, presents a unique context wherein women's roles in decision-making processes are influenced by age-old practices and societal norms.

Moreover, the literature reveals that despite being a tribal-dominated society, there is inadequate attention given to understanding how traditional practices and customary laws shape women's political agency and representation. This knowledge gap is critical as it hampers efforts to create tailored interventions aimed at enhancing women's political participation in Nagaland. By neglecting to explore the impact of cultural and customary dynamics on women's political engagement, existing studies overlook a vital aspect of the socio-political landscape.

Therefore, it is imperative to conduct research that explores into the nuanced interplay between women's political participation and Nagaland's cultural and customary setting. Such investigations will provide valuable insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by women in navigating the political arena within the context of traditional practices and societal norms. Ultimately, addressing this research gap is essential to encourage gender equality and promoting women's empowerment in Nagaland's political sphere.

1.6 Research Questions

The study aims to address the following questions:

1. What role do women play in political participation in Nagaland?

2. To what extent is the level of political awareness among women?

3. What is the role of customary laws and traditional practices in determining the participation of women in politics in the state?

4. What are the different factors affecting the performance of women in political participation within Nagaland?

To answer these research questions, the present study formulated the following objectives.

1.7 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1.   To examine the demographic profile of the voters in the state of Nagaland.

2.   To identify the factors affecting the performance of women in political participation in Nagaland.

3.   To assess the level of political awareness among women and their role in political participation.

4.   To critically analyze the role of customary laws and traditional practices in determining the participation of women in politics.

1.8 Profile of The Study Area

Located in Northeast India, Nagaland attained statehood on December 1st, 1963, becoming the 16th state of the Indian Republic. It shares borders with Assam to the west, Myanmar to the east, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to the north, and Manipur to the south. The administrative center of the state is Kohima. According to the data from the 2011 Census, Nagaland spans an area covering 16,579 square kilometres (equivalent to 6,401 square miles) and is home to a population of 1,980,602 residents. This demographic profile positions Nagaland as one of the most compact states within India's geographical expanse. Nagaland is also known as the most Baptist state in the world and the population is mostly Christian. Nagaland boasts a rich tapestry of cultures, inhabited by 16 major tribes, each renowned for its unique and captivating traditions. While the state is predominantly mountainous, the areas bordering the Assam valley offer contrasting plains. Standing as the highest peak in Nagaland, Mount Saramati towers at an impressive altitude of 12,552 feet. English serves as the primary language spoken by the majority of the state's population, serving as the official language as well. According to the 2011 census, Nagaland boasts a commendable literacy rate of 80 per cent. Regarding gender distribution, Nagaland exhibits a sex ratio of 931 females for every 1000 males. The urban population of Nagaland constitutes of 28.86 Per cent. The 16 major tribes in the state are namely: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Kachari, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Kuki, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchunger, and Zeme-Liangmai (Zeliang). Additionally, there are

several minor tribes or subtribes such as Garo, Mikir, Chirr, Makury, Rongmei, and Tikhir. Beyond these indigenous communities, there is a notable presence of non-tribal groups like Nepalis, Marwaris, and Bengalis, particularly concentrated around Dimapur city.

Administratively, Nagaland comprises 16 districts, namely Chomoukedima, Dimapur, Kiphire, Kohima, Longleng, Mokokchung, Mon, Niuland, Noklak, Phek, Peren, Shamator, Tseminyu, Tuensang, Wokha, and Zunheboto. The state's legislative assembly operates on a unicameral system, composed of 60 Members of the Legislative Assembly. Currently, the BJP-NDPP alliance holds power in the government, led by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. The opposition party in the state legislative assembly is presently the Naga People's Front (NPF) (Nagaland Govt portal).

Fig. 1.1 Area of study
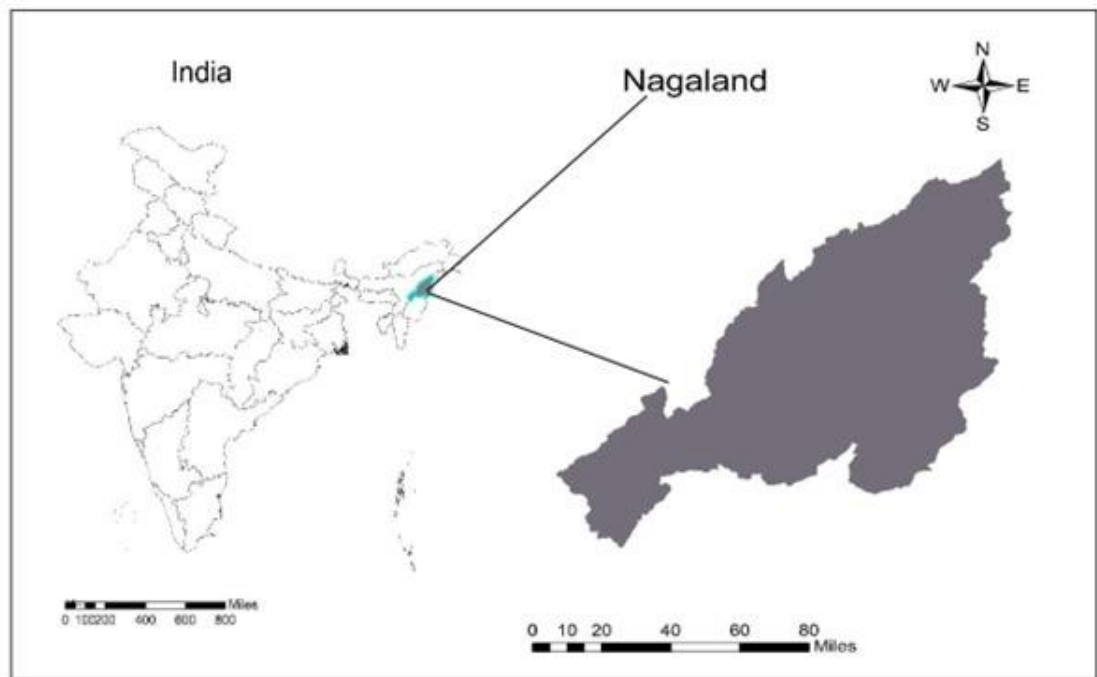
Source: Author's estimation using ArcGIS software

1.9 Research Methodology

The methodology significantly contributes to enhancing the quality, enrichment, and formulation of scientific conclusions in any study (Nongbri, 2017). At the outset of the research, Nagaland comprised 11 districts, but presently, it encompasses 16 districts (Nagaland State Portal). For this study, the researcher opted to select four districts based on their constituency numbers: two districts with the lowest number of constituencies and two with the highest (Census, Nagaland 2011).

Table 1.1 Population of the study

The population of the study includes the eligible electorates in the four districts of Nagaland covering 23 constituencies out of the total 60.

Districts	Electors
Mokokchung	1,58,597
Mon	1,55,501
Longleng	48,987
Kiphire	56,629
Total	4,19,714

Source: Election Commission of India (2023)

1.10 Sample of the study

A sample refers to a subset of individuals or groups selected to represent the entire population. In the context of this study, the sample would consist of eligible voters, typically defined as individuals aged 18 years and above.

The sample size was estimated using Cochran formula.

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where,

e is the desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error)

p is the estimated proportion of the population.

q is 1- *p*

The Z value is found in the Z table.

Table 1.2: Sample respondents.

Districts	Total No. of Constituencies visited	No. of Constituencies visited		Total respondence
		Rural	**Urban**	
Mon	9	6	3	156
Mokokchung	10	6	4	174
Longleng	2	1	1	36
Kiphire	2	1	1	36
Total	23	14	9	**402**

Source: Author's estimation.

1.1.1 Tools

The research employed two key tools for data collection: a questionnaire and an interview schedule.

a) **Questionnaire**: Firstly, a researcher-designed questionnaire was utilized to gather information from the electorates in the selected districts of Nagaland. This questionnaire aimed to assess the status of women's political participation.

b) **Interview schedule**: The researcher developed an interview schedule to conduct interviews with experts like MLAs, Political party leaders, and Tribal NGOs. This served as a means to cross-verify and supplement the data obtained from the electorates. The combination of these tools ensured an overview of women's political participation and an understanding of the sociocultural and traditional influence on political participation in the four districts under consideration.

1.1.2 Development of the tools

a) **Questionnaire development**: Initially, the researcher conducted a thorough survey of relevant literature to identify the specific areas requiring information. This preliminary exploration informed the subsequent construction of a questionnaire aimed at eliciting accurate responses from electorates. The questionnaire design was constructed in such a way that respondents were expected to give accurate responses.

b) **Development of interview schedule**: An interview schedule was organized for Political experts like MLAs, Political party leaders, and Tribal NGOs. This was done to verify and validate the data obtained from the electorate. The interview schedule delved into crucial areas including current political challenges, gender representation, and women's involvement in politics, as well as the cultural and societal obstacles hindering women's participation. By strategically addressing these dimensions, research tools were carefully crafted to offer a holistic assessment and understanding of women's political engagement, along with insights into the socio-cultural and traditional influences on political participation in the chosen districts of Nagaland.

1.1.3 Standardization of the Tools

a) **Validity**: To ensure that the research instruments were measuring what they were designed to measure, the investigator carried out detailed references of the research work done before in various states of India. The researcher also made sure that the issues being raised in the objectives were covered and at the same time it was modified with the suggestions of the supervisors and other experts in the field.

The process was then carried out getting the expert's comments of the members from the faculty in the Department of Political Science, Lovely Professional University whose suggestions were incorporated into the construction of the tools. The questionnaire was also given to the faculty from the Department of Political Science from the state of Nagaland.

Pilot Study: A pilot study was carried out on 10 Per cent of the sample from the district of Mokokchung. This was for both the electorates and the experts. On the basis of the pilot study a few questions for both the electorates and political experts were mortified. The researcher mortified the questionnaire with the necessary inclusion of the questions and excluded the irrelevant questionnaire which didn't fit into our mentioned study.

1.1.4 Methods

The present study utilized a descriptive survey method to gather data from the sample, aligning with the defined objectives and employing planned tools. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in the data collection process. The use of a descriptive survey method is used for this study as it facilitates systematic collection of data to examine prevailing conditions, attitudes, and practices related to the study. This method is particularly effective in capturing a broad range of perspectives from a defined population, allowing for the identification of key patterns and determinants relevant to the research objectives.

The incorporation of both primary and secondary data sources enhances the comprehensiveness and credibility of the study. Primary data, obtained through structured instruments, offer firsthand insights into the political behavior and experiences of women, while secondary data provide contextual grounding and support the interpretation of empirical findings. This combined approach ensures a well-rounded and empirically grounded understanding of the research problem.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the utilization of simple Per centages, ANOVA, and Regression techniques, with results presented through graphical representation. Additionally, qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews will undergo transcription and, if necessary, translation into English. Subsequent qualitative analysis techniques will be applied to identify themes, patterns, and insights within the qualitative data. This study adopts a dual approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. By combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the research aims to provide a nuanced and robust analysis of the subject matter.

Chapter 2

Demographic Dynamics: An Inquiry into Voter Profiles in Nagaland

2.1 Introduction

In the words of Abraham Lincoln, "a true democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people". All citizens, regardless of gender, must participate in politics for democracy to succeed. While most democracies have a system where all societal segments elect their government, it is questionable if this government truly represents all the varied societal segments and, more significantly, if it serves the interests of all citizens. International agreements and treaties universally recognize that both men and women are entitled to equal participation in all aspects of the political process. According to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every individual has the inherent right to engage in the governance of their nation, whether directly or through freely chosen representatives. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, have fair and equitable access to opportunities within public service.

2.2 Gendering Process

The gendering process of a human begins in infancy, where for instance, a boy is wrapped in a blue blanket, whereas a girl is in a pink blanket. As children grow, cultural cues continue to reinforce these gender norms. Gender socialization, a lifelong process, involves learning cultural expectations, forming one's identity, and integrating into society through social interactions. Despite its seemingly ordinary nature, gender socialization profoundly shapes societal norms and individual behaviors. Each generation transmits essential cultural values to the next through this process. Gender socialization specifically involves the acquisition of cultural behaviors associated with femininity or masculinity corresponding to one's biological sex (Lindsey, 2010). There are four primary theories concerning gender socialization, which elucidate how children acquire gender identity, recognize the existence of two sexes, and adopt associated behaviors. Social learning theory emphasizes the role of rewards and punishments in shaping adherence to societal gender norms. Cognitive development

theory suggests that gender identity facilitates the organization of children's behavior, leading them to align their actions with their perceived gender. Gender schema theory, which falls under cognitive development theory, suggests that gender acts as a primary organizing element within the cognitive frameworks of children. Finally, social cognitive theory, the most recent model, seeks to unify the theories by integrating concepts of imitation, observation, self-regulation, and self-reflection to explain gender-related behavior. (Lindsey, 2010).

As a feminist issue, the underrepresentation of women is attributed to patriarchal power structures, often presented as one among many gender inequalities in statistical analyses. Consequently, it may not frequently receive focused attention in popular feminist discourse. This does not mean that it is an issue that can be tossed aside, as it addresses relevant issues and challenges in many societies. For many, the argument supporting the increase of women in elected legislatures is considered self-evident; nevertheless, there persists some resistance to the notion that we should be concerned about the identity of our elected representatives. While some contend that the actions of representatives matter more (Pitkin, 1967), others have sought to prove that voters may not necessarily prioritize the gender of their representatives (Cowley, 2013). Conversely, feminist scholars have put forth compelling arguments supporting the assertion that the gender of representatives does indeed matter. There are several compelling reasons why the representation of women in political office matters. First, women politicians serve as symbols of empowerment, inspiring other women to pursue political leadership roles. Second, women often bring unique perspectives and insights to address issues that are specific to women, which may not be adequately represented or understood by male politicians. Third, women are more inclined to adopt consensual and cooperative approaches to governance, contributing to more effective and inclusive decision-making processes. Lastly, the absence of women from positions of power despite comprising half of the population is inherently unjust (Phillips, 1995).

2.3 Modern Political History of the State of Nagaland
To effectively engage with Naga political culture, it's crucial to comprehend the historical and political legacy inherited by the Nagas. With the failure to prevent the

partition of British India into Pakistan and India in 1947, the Indian nationalist elites who took over the political power from the British were determined and aspired to build a united and strong nation-state in India. Throughout the duration of British colonial rule, the Northeast region was distinctly treated as a separate entity from the rest of British India. Initially encompassed within the Bengal Province, it retained this affiliation even after attaining status as the separate province of Assam in 1874, yet it remained administratively tied to Bengal. Furthermore, the implementation of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation in 1873 introduced the Line System, supposedly aimed at protecting the interests of minority indigenous ethnic groups inhabiting the hill areas of Assam. This regulation imposed stringent restrictions on the entry of outsiders, their business activities, land transactions, and settlement in these regions. To fortify this protective measure, the hill zones were divided into "excluded areas" and "partially excluded areas" in 1935.

During the colonial period, the Northeastern region experienced a historical narrative marked by isolation and seclusion, which posed considerable obstacles to the subsequent endeavors of nation-building and integration in post-colonial India. Within this context, the emergence of a feeling of alienation eventually engendered resentment towards the prospect of integration into the Indian nation-state, especially as local aspirations often found themselves sidelined by the central government. Given this historical backdrop, anti-India sentiments grew among the people of the Northeast, making it susceptible to incitement of antagonism. The independent Nagas waged a resistance against the British from 1833 to 1879 to defend their sovereignty. Eventually, on March 27, 1880, an agreement was reached with the British based on Naga customary practices and norms. According to this accord, the British were permitted verbally to establish military bases in Naga territory as friends and guests, without any implication of surrendering Naga sovereignty. It's noteworthy that the Nagas never entered into a formal treaty with the British, a fact confirmed by the British government on record (Imchen, 2010). The British mission to civilize the perceived 'savage' Naga headhunters residing in the Northeastern frontier of India was not intentional but rather incidental. The primary focus of the British administration was to safeguard their profitable tea trade and oil exploration ventures in the Brahmaputra valley (Kikon, 2006). Despite efforts by the Indian state to integrate them into the post-colonial Indian

Union, the Nagas, asserting their right to self-determination based on their distinct ethnic identity and unique history, rejected the invitation to join the Indian union. Although initially, the protest started peacefully with the rise in the state repression, the Nagas gradually took up arms for independence from the Indian union. Seventeen Naga tribes and an additional twenty sub-tribes came together under the banner of the Naga National Council (NNC) in August 1947 to voice their protest and demand for an independent Nagaland. On August 14, 1947, the Nagas proclaimed their independence. With its worst experience of partition during its independence India was not ready for another partition to happen though the Nagas argued that they were never a part of the Indian Union. The Naga National Council (NNC) officially established the Naga Federal Government (NFG), led by President Scatu Swu, along with the Naga Federal Army (NFA) on March 22, 1956 (*University of Central Arkansas, UCA*, n.d.). Following this development, the Indian government swiftly deployed military forces into the Naga-inhabited region by April 1956. Shortly after, Angami Zapu Phizo, a prominent figure, dissolved the NNC in May 1956 and sought refuge in East Pakistan by December 1956. The Naga People's Convention (NPC) convened on multiple occasions, including gatherings in Kohima in August 1957, Mokokchung District in May 1958, and another session in Mokokchung in October 1959. Subsequently, on June 12, 1960 Angami Zapu Phizo escaped into exile in London.

Notably, Nagaland emerged as the first region in the Northeast to achieve statehood, which significantly influenced subsequent state formations in the area. Initially, the Tuensang area, recognized as the "Naga Tribal Area" in the Constitution, was designated as a district within the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA). In 1957, the Tuensang area was integrated with the Naga Hills District, resulting in the formation of the Naga Hills Tuensang Area (NHTA) as a Central Government Administrative Area. Later, the NHTA was renamed Nagaland through the Nagaland (Transitional Provisions) Regulation of 1961, which was eventually supplanted by the State of Nagaland Act of 1962, elevating Nagaland to the status of a full-fledged state. The official inauguration of the State of Nagaland took place in December 1963.

The creation of Nagaland has deep historical roots, dating back to the British colonial era. During this period, the British administration, in an effort to maintain peace and preserve traditional Naga society, adopted a policy of non-interference, effectively

isolating the Nagas (Rustomji, 1983; Baruah, 1999). Nevertheless, even amid this policy, there emerged a movement advocating for Naga independence as early as 1918. The formation of the "Naga Club," backed by British assistance, epitomized this sentiment, as it engaged in discussions regarding the fate of the Naga hills following British departure and advocated for the reinstatement of the autonomous status formerly held by Naga society (Misra, 2000).

The remote and isolated nature of the Naga hills, coupled with weak connections with the rest of British India, facilitated the preservation of Naga identity. Additionally, the spread of Christianity during the British period further contributed to shaping the Nagas' identity. Following World War II, the Naga Club transformed into the Naga National Council (NNC) and, in June 1945, presented a memorandum to the British government demanding autonomous status for the Naga area. As India's independence drew nearer, the NNC escalated their demands. In December 1946, they articulated a plea for self-governance for all Naga tribes, which was succeeded by a request for the right of self-determination in February 1947 (Misra, 2000). The Naga National Council (NNC) substantiated their assertion based on ethnic identity, the traditional social structure, customary jurisprudence, religion, and other pertinent facets (Kumar, 1996). Subsequently, in May 1947, the NNC requested an interim government (Misra, 2000), and in June 1947, they met with the Governor of Assam and reached an accord with him. A 42-member interim governing assembly, led by Imkongliba Ao, was established on February 18, 1961. The state of Nagaland was officially established by the Indian government on December 1, 1963. P. Shilu Ao of the Naga Nationalist Organization (NNO) assumed office as Chief Minister on December 1, 1963. Subsequently, elections were held in the state of Nagaland from January 10 to 16, 1964.

Amidst the conflicts, a ceasefire agreement known as the Agreement for Suspension of Operations (AGSOP) was signed between the government and Naga representatives on May 24, 1964. The ceasefire officially commenced on September 5, 1964 (*University of Central Arkansas, UCA*, n.d). Unfortunately, both parties incurred significant casualties during the conflicts.

Naga tribes possess a rich heritage rooted in a predominantly oral culture, which relies heavily on mythic folklore conveyed through narratives. Additionally, they possess a

rich collection of material culture and maintain a socio-political system that is distinct to each tribe, and in some instances, unique to each village. Understanding these elements is essential for gaining insight into the intricacies of Naga political culture. Since the early 20th century, marking the onset of the tumultuous relationship between Nagaland and India, the political landscape of Naga society has predominantly been shaped by men (Vaiphei, 2017). The emergence of the Naga nationalist movement gave rise to a localized awareness of a distinctive social identity, framed within a patriarchal discourse following the establishment of the 'Naga Club' in 1918. During this period, women were notably absent from active participation, reflecting the traditional fabric of Naga society, where matters of social and political significance were primarily the purview of men. The way politics works in Nagaland today is shaped by a mix of historical events, how different tribes organize themselves socially, what people feel politically obligated to do, the influence of nearby states political styles, and how much social media plays a role. All these things together make up the way decisions are made, and discussions happen in Nagaland's political scene. A distinctive method of political socialization that is passed down through generations is infused into Naga political culture because of this mixing (Yanthan, 2023). "The allegiance that Naga has towards their village and, by that token, to their community, is reflexive in the way elections are carried out" (Ao, 2012). This accurately describes Naga political consciousness as it has been defined and sustained. Moreover, men and men's traits are seen as normal in patriarchal ideologies. Women are perceived as inferior to men in any way that they differ from them. As a result, in areas of life where men and women typically differ, the norms are designed to fit men's traits rather than those of women.

2.4 Participation in Voting

According to democratic theory, citizens play a crucial role in shaping government policies through their active involvement in electoral processes, where voting stands out as the foremost means of political participation within liberal democratic frameworks (Marshall, 1998). This fundamental act of political involvement is crucial for determining and assessing consensus within a democratic framework. Moreover, voting serves as a crucial metric of democratic engagement, representing the minimal

level of citizen participation and offering insight into the vitality of a democracy (Franklin, 2004). It directly impacts the selection of public officials and serves as the primary mechanism for holding representatives accountable to the electorate. Hence, the importance of voting in the examination in assessing political engagement cannot be emphasized enough.

In this study, respondents' engagement in voting is assessed through a single query to gauge their level of participation: "Did you cast your vote in the last Assembly Election?" responses include '**yes**' or '**no**'. Respondents who participated in the previous Nagaland Assembly Election are labelled as voters, while those who didn't are classified as non-voters. As indicated in Figure 2.1, among 402 respondents, 89.80 per cent exercised their right to vote, while 10.20 per cent abstained from voting. This underscores a notably high voter turnout rate in Nagaland.

Fig 2.1. Per centage of Voters and Non-Voters.
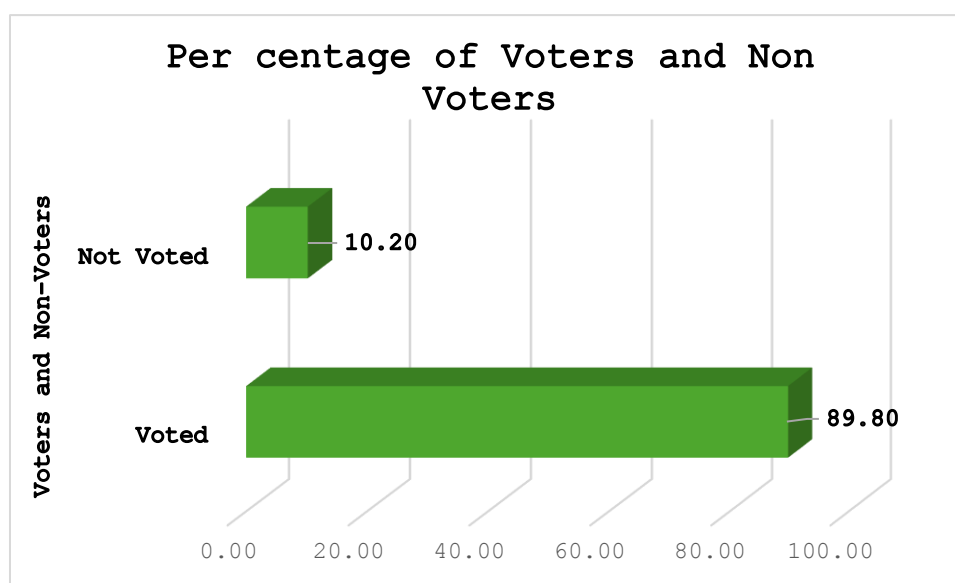
Source: Survey report

2.5 Motivations for Casting Ballots

The turnout rate in elections is frequently regarded as an indicator of a democracy's vitality (Fieldhouse et al., 2007). Numerous factors and issues contribute significantly to the electorate's voting choices. When voters head to the polls, they generally do so

for one of two primary motivations: either driven by their own self-interest or by a sense of civic responsibility (Ahuja & Chhibber, 2012). Additionally, voting can signify strong convictions or apathy (Butler and Collins, 1984). These reasons span from local to national concerns, including the cost of living, communal security, and disillusionment with politicians, which all influence voting decisions (DeSouza, 1996). Some individuals take pride in staying informed and actively engaged in civic affairs, while others vote as a duty to uphold democratic principles. Voting is perceived as a means of contributing to the political system's vitality and may be influenced by social factors such as friends' or relatives' voting behavior. Some voters also base their decisions on factors like household influence, party leaders' personalities, the government's performance, and their own economic well-being. Furthermore, voters may be swayed by promises or favors from candidates, such as job security or material rewards. Consequently, the motivations behind voting are diverse and complex, with various factors shaping individuals' decisions. To explore these factors, respondents were asked about their reasons for voting, as depicted in Figure 2.2.

Fig. 2.2 Reason for Voting
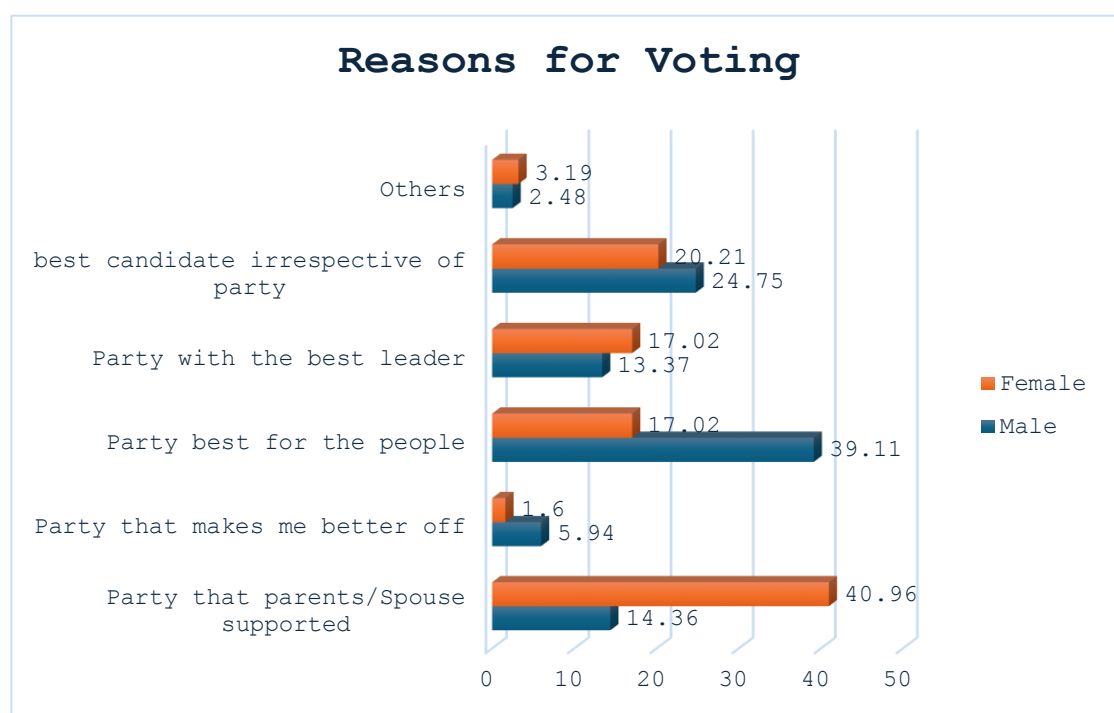
Source: Survey Report

The data highlights a significant divergence in voting motivations between genders, with a notably higher Per centage of females (40.96Per cent) citing familial or spousal support for a particular party compared to males (14.36Per cent), indicating a notable influence of family dynamics on female voting behavior. Some respondents expressed the belief that voting decisions should be made collectively within the family, often by the male head of the household, a prevalent practice in Naga society. Some female respondents explained their deference to male family members in political decisions by attributing it to the latter's perceived superior knowledge of politics, while others cited disinterest in politics and a greater focus on family and church matters.

Conversely, although both genders place importance on voting for the party they perceive as most beneficial for the people, a significantly higher proportion of males (39.11 per cent) adhere to this perspective in contrast to females (17.02 per cent). This discrepancy suggests potential variations in perceived societal priorities and political values. One possible explanation for men voting based on what they perceive as best for the people could stem from their roles as leaders and decision-makers within local communities. In the Naga society, men have historically held prominent positions as decision-makers according to their customs and traditions. They may feel a sense of responsibility to vote in a manner that serves the interests of the broader populace, reflecting a belief in their duty to care for the welfare of society. Nonetheless, despite these variations, there is a convergence in both genders' inclination to prioritize individual candidate merit regardless of party affiliation, indicating a shared tendency to evaluate candidates based on personal qualities rather than strict party allegiance.

These findings provide insight into the complex interplay of gender dynamics and voting motivations, suggesting that familial influence and perceptions of societal benefit exert distinct influences on the voting decisions of males and females in the electoral process.

Table 2.1. Male/Female contestants in Nagaland state assembly elections (1964-2023)

Year of election	No. of seats	Total No. of candidates who contested in the elections.			No. Of candidates who Forfeited deposits.	
		Male	Female	No. of Female Elected	Male	Female
1964	40	73	-	-	9	
1969	60	142	2	Nil	39	0
1974	60	219	-	-	67	
1977	60	204	-	-	43	
1982	60	244	1	Nil	69	1
1987	60	211	3	Nil	49	2
1989	60	140	-	-		
1993	60	177	1	Nil	33	1
1998	60	80	-	-	2	
2003	60	222	3	Nil	77	3
2008	60	214	4	Nil	74	3
2013	60	185	2	Nil	46	1
2018	60	190	5	Nil	55	3
2023	60		4	2	0	0
Total		**2301**	**25**	**2**	**563**	**14**

Source: Statistical Report Election Commission of India (2023)

From the above-given table, we can see that the number of male candidates who contested elections in the Nagaland state legislative assembly from 1964-2023 is overwhelmingly more in number than the female counterpart. The number of female contestants is so low that it is more like in existence. We can also see that out of the 14 elections being held only two female candidates were successfully elected as Member of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly for the very first time. In 9 out of the 14 elections so far 25 female candidates have contested where out of the 25 candidates, 14 had to forfeit their deposits which depicts the picture of women contesting in elections in Nagaland which could be caused by various factors.

2.6 Gender and Voting

One of the extensively documented research findings underscores the observed global phenomenon wherein women exhibit lower levels of political engagement compared to men. This prevailing perception often characterizes men as more active participants in political affairs (Burns et al., 2001). Historically, politics has been depicted as a domain primarily occupied by men, with governance institutions perceived as exclusive "men's clubs." Prior to World War I, a select few instances of women's suffrage existed, notably in New Zealand 1893, Finland 1906, and Norway 1913. The aftermath of the war also saw the extension of voting rights to women in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Britain. Despite such advancements, formal political parity between genders was largely achieved post-World War II in many nations, affording women the equal right to vote and hold legislative positions without constitutional prejudice (Nagasaila, 1980).

The notion of the gender gap in voting pertains to variations in voting behaviors between women and men, particularly concerning their preferences for specific candidates. Contrary to common belief, the data presented in Table 2 challenges the notion that men exhibit higher voting turnout than women. This dataset, derived from the General Elections to the Nagaland Assembly spanning from 1964 to 2023, indicates that in 9 out of 14 Assembly Elections, female voter turnout exceeded that of males. The gender-disaggregated data is unavailable for the first General Elections to the Nagaland Assembly 1964.

Table 2.2. Gender Difference in voting in Nagaland (1964-2023)

Year	Voters			Voters Who Voted			Per cent Of Voters		Differences in Votes polled by Male and female In Per cent.
	M	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	
1964	124166	-	124166	41331	21388	62719	33.29	-	
1969	93829	83102	176931	71751	66907	138658	76.47	80.51	4.04
1974	224166	176156	400322	161166	136464	297630	71.90	77.47	5.57
1977	214812	183223	398035	176606	154795	331401	82.21	84.48	2.27
1982	330290	266163	596453	240272	203700	443972	72.74	76.53	3.79
1987	319379	262574	581953	266023	225878	491901	83.29	86.62	3.33
1989	320611	261805	582416	273654	225168	498822	85.35	86.01	0.66
1993	421250	381661	802911	387446	347489	734935	91.98	91.05	0.93
1998	136963	123683	260646	110462	95326	205788	80.65	77.07	3.58
2003	529477	485364	1014841	474181	417316	891497	89.56	85.98	3.58
2008	666391	635875	1302266	573021	549362	1122383	85.99	86.39	0.4
2013	608299	590150	1198449	541919	538968	1080887	89.56	85.98	3.58

| 2018 | 597281 | 579151 | 1176432 | 487832 | 498561 | 986393 | 81.68 | 86.09 | 4.41 |
| 2023 | 655355 | 649984 | 1305339 | 554485 | 570972 | 1149971 | 84.60 | 87.84 | 3.24 |

Source: Statistical Report Election Commission of India.

As depicted in the table 2.2, female voters participated at a higher rate than male voters in nearly all Assembly Elections held in Nagaland. Beyond the act of voting itself, the decision-making process leading to electoral choices warrants scrutiny. This prompts an inquiry into how women exercise their voting rights and the factors influencing their decisions to support a political party or candidate. Central to this inquiry is whether women voters make independent choices at the ballot box. Drawing from Shukla's (1987) research on female voters in Bihar's Kodarma Constituency, it is noted that India's traditional social structure commonly dictates that women defer to male authority in decision-making across different domains. As a result, women may perceive themselves as lacking the autonomy to think and act independently. There is a perception that women may turn to male household members, such as fathers, husbands, or brothers, for guidance when making voting choices. To explore this dynamic, respondents were queried about whether their voting choices stemmed from their own initiative or if they were influenced by others.

Fig 2.3. Per centage of Voting Decision by Gender
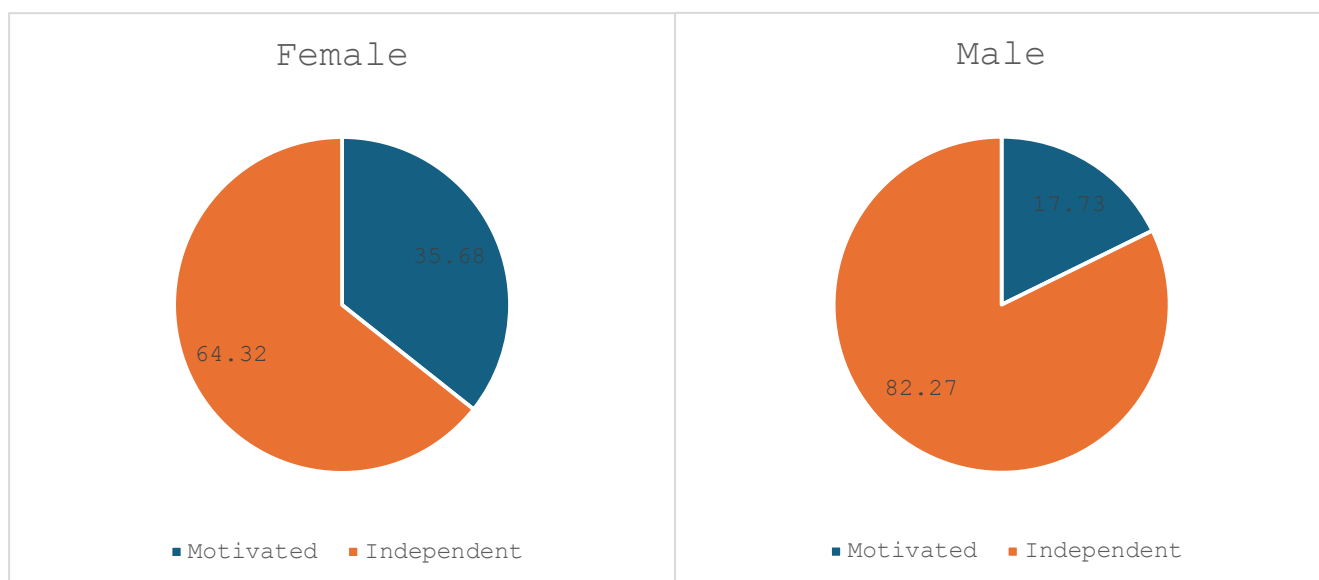
Source: Survey Report

Fig 2.3 illustrates the Per centage distribution of individuals, categorized by gender, to understand the extent of motivation by another party while voting. Notably, among the male respondents, 17.73Per cent indicated being motivated by others during the voting process, while a larger proportion of female respondents, constituting 35.68Per cent, reported a similar inclination. This finding suggests a substantial discrepancy between the genders concerning external motivational factors influencing voting behavior.

Furthermore, the data underscores the prevalence of independent decision-making during the voting process. Among male participants, a significant majority of 82.27Per cent asserted independence in their voting choices, whereas a slightly smaller majority of 64.32Per cent of female respondents similarly expressed autonomy in their decision-making. The data highlights a higher incidence of external motivation among female voters compared to their male counterparts. Numerous factors contribute to the observed trend of women not making independent voting decisions. A considerable portion of female respondents indicated that family influence heavily influenced their voting choices, as depicted in Figure 2.3. This indicates the significant role that family dynamics play in shaping women's voting decisions. A primary factor hindering many

women from exercising their right to vote autonomously is the prevalence of family-driven voting practices.

Fig. 2.4 Decision making in politics.
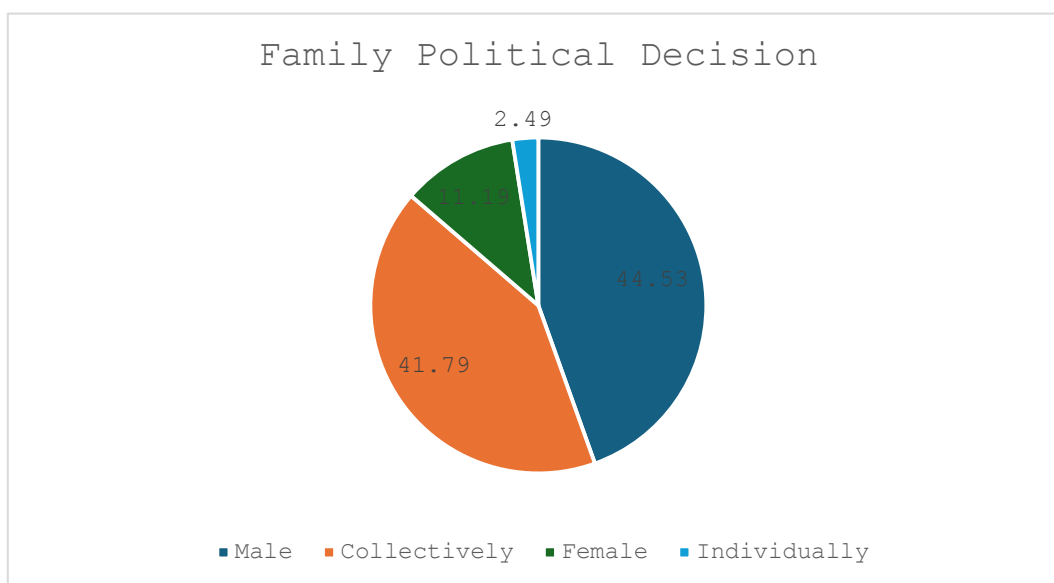
Source: Survey Report

Fig. 2.4 outlines the Per centage distribution of political decision-makers within families, segmented into four categories: "***Male***," "***Female***," "***Collectively***," and "***Individually***."

Among the delineated categories, the data reveals that a substantial majority of political decision-making within families is attributed to males, constituting 44.53Per cent. This suggests a predominant role played by men in shaping political decisions within the household.

Furthermore, the data highlights the prevalence of collective decision-making dynamics within families, with the category "Collectively" encompassing 41.79Per cent of political decision-makers. This suggests that a considerable portion of political

decisions is arrived at through consensus or shared decision-making processes among family members.

Conversely, female political decision-makers represent a notably smaller proportion, accounting for only 11.19Per cent of the total. This finding underscores a significant gender disparity in political decision-making authority within familial contexts.

In contrast, individual decision-making within families emerges as a relatively minor factor, comprising only 2.49Per cent of the total. This indicates that a minority of political decisions within households are made by individuals acting independently of collective or gender-specific influences.

Thus, the data illustrates a dominance of male political decision-makers within families, accompanied by a significant reliance on collective decision-making processes. These findings underscore the complex interplay of gender dynamics and collective decision-making norms in shaping political decision-making within familial contexts.

2.7 Age and Voting Participation

Acknowledging the pivotal role of socio-economic factors in shaping political engagement, the subsequent section scrutinizes respondents' involvement in electoral activities within the context of socio-economic variables. Socio-economic status (SES) has been recognized as a determinant of participatory behaviors (Nagler, 1991), with numerous studies underscoring its significance. Gender differences in these attributes are commonly posited to contribute to any observed gender discrepancy in political involvement. Therefore, the influence of age, marital status, education, and residency on the political engagement levels of respondents is examined.

Age is consistently identified as a major factor influencing voter turnout (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). In life-cycle theory, age acts as a distinguishing factor: people typically demonstrate increased interest in politics and a greater readiness to actively participate as they grow older (Highton & Wolfinger, 2001). However, empirical evidence consistently indicates lower voter turnout among younger demographics (Milan, 2005). Life-cycle theorists contend that young individuals often prioritize pursuits other than voting, such as education or career development. Existing literature

suggests that older citizens, presumed to be more versed in the political process, exhibit higher voting rates compared to their younger counterparts (Gauthier, 2003). Young individuals exhibit insufficient involvement in political affairs. (O'Toole et al., 2003). Maturity acts as a stimulant for greater participation, leading to the assumption that levels of engagement may increase with age.

Table 2.3. Voting across different age groups.

Characteristics	Male		Total	Female		Total
Age	Voted	Not Voted		Voted	Not Voted	
18-35	90.14%	9.86%	100%	68.60%	31.40%	100%
36-60	94.44%	5.56%	100%	97.56%	2.44%	100%
60 & Above	93.33%	6.67%	100%	92.34%	7.14%	100%
Total	92.64%	7.36%	100%	86.34%	13.66%	100%

Source: Survey Report

As indicated in Table 2.3, there are notable disparities in political participation across different age groups. Among men, the highest voter turnout was observed in the 36-60 age bracket, with 94.44Per cent participation, followed by men aged 60 and above (93.33Per cent), and those aged 18-35 (90.14Per cent). Similarly, women in the 36-60 age range exhibited the highest voting rate (97.56Per cent), trailed by those aged 60 and above (92.34Per cent), and finally, women aged 18-35, with a turnout of 68.60Per cent.

Despite an overall high turnout of 89.49Per cent in the sample for the 2018 Assembly Election, variations in voting participation persist across the three age cohorts for both genders. The data indicates a pattern of increasing voter turnout from youth to middle age, followed by a slight decrease in older age groups. Interestingly, individuals aged 60 and above exhibited a higher turnout compared to those aged 18-35. While the turnout among younger voters is notable, it still falls short in comparison to their older counterparts.

There exist various explanations for the lower propensity of younger voters to engage in electoral activities compared to their older counterparts. One plausible rationale is

the lack of significance of politics among the younger demographic. However, this apathy towards politics might evolve as they mature. Strate et al. (1989) suggest that the underrepresentation of young adults in political processes stems from their limited exposure to political affairs. Young individuals often prioritize pursuits such as education and career establishment, which may hinder the cultivation of political acumen observed in older cohorts. Similarly, the life-cycle theory of political engagement posits that the competing demands of education, employment, and social interactions overshadow political interests among the youth (Desposato & Norrander, 2005).

Studies underscore the comparative dearth of political knowledge among young citizens relative to their elder counterparts (Pattie et al., 2004). Moreover, they exhibit a distinct lack of enthusiasm for formal political participation (Park, 1995). Compared to older demographics, young adults demonstrate lower levels of political activism (Electoral Commission and the Hansard Society, 2007), weaker affiliations with political parties (Clarke et al., 2004), and decreased likelihood of organizational memberships (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). Their lessen concern for politics, coupled with lower political literacy, results in reduced engagement in civic and political endeavors, reflecting a prevalent apathy and subdued interest in political affairs (Henn et al., 2002).

Conversely, voter turnout tends to increase with age. The positive correlation between advancing age and heightened electoral participation can be interpreted through various lenses. Lane (1959) contends that maturity instigates developmental shifts that augment the inclination and impetus to partake in the political sphere. Notably, the bolstered economic stability associated with middle age liberates cognitive bandwidth and emotional reserves, facilitating greater political involvement. Additionally, aging individuals amass diverse resources, encompassing experiential insights, cognitive aptitude, adeptness, and social networks, all of which bolster political engagement. Furthermore, the amplifying familial income and augmented levels of community involvement facilitate heightened civic engagement, thereby bolstering political participation (Rashid & Gao, 2012).

2.8 Educational Qualification and voting

Extensive empirical research within the field of political science has consistently shown a strong association between educational achievement and the likelihood of engaging in political participation. Research consistently demonstrates that individuals with greater educational attainment exhibit a stronger propensity to vote in elections and engage actively in political campaigns (Hillygus, 2005). Furthermore, scholars have emphasized the significant role education plays in promoting political and social engagement among individuals (Brady et al., 1995). The level of educational attainment significantly influences an individual's propensity for political engagement and their decision to participate in various forms of political activity (Verba et al., 1993).

The robust connection between educational achievement and political involvement stems from several factors. Education furnishes individuals with the cognitive abilities crucial for navigating the intricacies of politics and instills a sense of civic duty (Gidengil, Blais, Nevitte, & Nadeau, 2003). Furthermore, education not only enhances levels of political involvement but also empowers individuals with the civic competencies required to effectively communicate their concerns to policymakers (Verba et al., 1993). Moreover, education provides individuals with the knowledge and analytical skills essential for understanding political issues, evaluating candidates, and engaging in informed political discourse (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993).

According to Almond and Verba (1963), individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to possess awareness of political matters, understand the impact of government policies, and actively follow political developments through various media channels. Moreover, the highly educated are more likely to perceive themselves as capable of influencing government decisions and feel empowered to participate in political discourse. Thus, education emerges as a significant determinant of voting behavior and various other forms of political engagement.

However, these generalizations are based on studies conducted in different countries. Several recent studies have raised doubts about whether education serves as a direct cause or merely acts as a proxy for other factors unrelated to education (Berinsky &

Lenz, 2011). Despite the general consensus on the positive correlation between educational achievement and voting behavior, the relationship between educational status and voting presents a paradoxical challenge. Despite the conventional belief that higher levels of education lead to increased voting participation, recent trends suggest otherwise. For instance, in Nagaland, where literacy rates have risen to 79.6 per cent, with female literacy at 76.1 per cent and male literacy at 82.8 per cent (Census, 2011), one would anticipate a proportional rise in voter turnout among the more educated population. However, the study indicates the opposite trend, with voting participation actually decreasing as educational levels rise. Consequently, the study challenges the notion that educational attainment significantly influences political participation, highlighting a lack of substantial evidence to support this claim.

Table 2.4. Educational Qualification and Voting

Characteristics	Male		Total	Female		Total
Educational Qualification	**Voted**	**Not Voted**		**Voted**	**Not Voted**	
Illiterate	95.45%	4.76%	100%	90.91%	10.00%	100%
Primary	92.31%	8.33%	100%	96.00%	4.17%	100%
Undergraduate	96.05	4.11	100%	85.71	16.67	100%
Graduate & Above	90.00	11.11	100%	80.72	23.88	100%

Source: Survey Report

The data presented in the table 2.4 indicates that among male respondents, the highest voter turnout is observed among those with undergraduate education (96.05 per cent), followed by illiterate individuals (95.45 per cent), primary education (92.31per cent),

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and graduate and above qualifications (90 per cent). Among female voters, those with primary education exhibit the highest voting turnout (96 Per cent), followed by illiterate individuals (90 per cent), undergraduate education (85.71 per cent), and graduate and above qualifications (80.72 per cent). The data suggests that overall, voting turnout is highest among individuals with lower levels of education for both males and females. Interestingly, there is an inverse relationship between educational attainment and voting turnout, except for two categories: undergraduate among males and primary education among females. This trend is somewhat unexpected, as one might anticipate higher voter turnout among groups with higher levels of education.

Education is commonly considered a significant demographic factor influencing an individual's decision to participate in voting, although its impact is relatively limited. Given that voting is generally viewed as a relatively low-effort political endeavor, individual factors such as education have a diminished role in elucidating voter turnout compared to alternative modes of political involvement. Contrary to expectations, the study reveals that the least educated groups exhibit slightly higher voter turnout than the most highly educated. Therefore, it would be premature to generalize about voter apathy among the highly educated in Nagaland without further confirmation from additional studies. However, it could be inferred that highly educated voters might possess a heightened awareness of the political landscape in Nagaland, which is often characterized by corruption and misconduct. This disillusionment with the electoral process may alienate them and diminish their inclination to express their preferences through voting.

2.9 Marital Status and Voting

The prevailing literature on political participation commonly observes a trend wherein married individuals exhibit higher levels of voting activity compared to their unmarried counterparts. Therefore, there has been an endeavor to evaluate the potential significance of marital status, both married and unmarried, on the voting engagement of survey respondents. This entails a comprehensive examination and rephrasing of the impact that marital status may have on voter participation.

Table 2.5 Marital Status and Voting Behavior

	Voted	Not Voted
Married	92.56 %	7.44 %
Unmarried	79.86 %	20.14 %
Divorced	75.00 %	25.00 %
Widowed	94.12 %	5.88 %

Source: Survey Report

The data presented illustrates the voting behavior across different marital statuses, including "*Married*," "*Unmarried*," "*Divorced*," and "*Widowed*." Among married individuals, a significant majority of 92.56Per cent participated in voting, while a smaller proportion of 7.44Per cent did not cast their vote. This suggests a high level of voting engagement among married individuals. Similarly, unmarried individuals also displayed notable participation in voting, with 79.86Per cent casting their votes. However, the Per centage of unmarried individuals who did not vote stands at 20.14Per cent, indicating a comparatively lower level of engagement in the voting process compared to their married counterparts. For divorced individuals, the voting participation rate is slightly lower, with 75.00Per cent of respondents indicating that they voted, while 25.00Per cent did not participate in voting. On the other hand, widowed individuals exhibited a high level of voting engagement, with 94.12Per cent participating in voting. Only 5.88Per cent of widowed individuals did not cast their votes. However, it is important to note that the majority of the respondents fall under the married and unmarried categories thus the sample size of the divorced and widowed may be insignificant.

Overall, the data suggests that marital status may indeed have some influence on voting behavior, with married and widowed individuals demonstrating higher levels of voting participation compared to unmarried and divorced individuals. However, further

analysis would be required to understand the underlying factors contributing to these differences in voting behavior across different marital statuses.

The higher voter turnout among married individuals compared to those who have never married or are in other marital statuses can be attributed to several factors. One significant reason is the tendency for husbands and wives to vote as a cohesive unit, a phenomenon observed in studies examining voting patterns within households (Johnston et al., 2005). Research indicates that couples often align their political preferences and party affiliations after marriage (Stoker & Jennings, 1995).

Past research consistently indicates that married couples exhibit higher likelihoods of voting compared to unmarried individuals, indicating that marital status not only impacts participation but also shapes voting preferences (Hobbs et al., 2013; Elder & Greene, 2008). This heightened propensity for voting among married couples is attributed to the exchange of political information, mobilization efforts between spouses, and mutual interest in politics (Hobbs et al., 2013). Voter turnout initiatives targeting one spouse often persuade the other to participate in elections, leading to a high likelihood of both spouses voting in married households (Nickerson, 2008; Cutts & Fieldhouse, 2009).

Married individuals may also feel motivated to vote due to lower information costs and the influence of their spouse's encouragement, resulting in increased voter turnout (Glaser, 1959). This phenomenon, referred to as "re-socialization" after marriage, entails individuals adopting the voting behavior of their close associates, potentially sparking a cascade of turnout within their social network (Weiner, 1978; Fowler, 2005). However, it's worth noting that married couples with children may face different time constraints that could impact their voting participation, with parents being less likely to vote compared to their childless counterparts across all marital statuses (Wolfinger & Wolfinger, 2008). Additionally, the surge in political engagement among married individuals may not occur immediately following marriage, particularly among young newlyweds, as marriage initially dampens political participation (Stoker & Jennings, 1995).

2.10 Examining the Influence of Gender and Place of Residence on Voting Behavior

To ensure comparability, this study focuses on both urban and rural areas. Existing literature suggests that abstention rates are lower among urban voters (Rokkan, 2009). Similarly, Milbrath and Goel (1977) observed higher rates of participation in large urban areas.

Table 2.6 Per centage of voters by place of residence and gender

	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Voted	91.86 %	91.80%	86.15%	82.95%
Not Voted	8.14%	8.20%	13.85%	17.05%

Source: Survey Report

The provided data in table 2.6 offers valuable insights into the voting behavior of individuals across different gender groups residing in urban and rural areas. When considering male voters, the numbers indicate a slightly higher voting Per centage in rural areas compared to urban regions. Specifically, 91.80Per cent of males in rural areas participated in voting, while 91.86 Per cent of urban males exercised their voting rights. This marginal difference suggests a relatively consistent level of voter engagement among males across urban and rural settings.

Conversely, the voting patterns among female voters demonstrate a more pronounced disparity between urban and rural areas. In urban settings, 86.15 Per cent of females cast their votes, whereas only 82.95 Per cent of rural females participated in voting. This notable difference suggests that urban females exhibit a higher propensity for voting compared to their rural counterparts.

The data implies that urban areas generally exhibit higher voter turnout rates across both genders. While male voting Per centages remain relatively consistent between

urban and rural environments, the discrepancy in female voting rates is more substantial. This suggests that factors influencing female voter participation may vary significantly depending on the urban or rural context.

Further analysis is warranted to explore the underlying reasons behind these observed differences in voting behavior. Possible factors to consider include accessibility to polling stations, socio-economic disparities, cultural norms, and levels of political engagement within urban and rural communities. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights for policymakers and electoral authorities aiming to promote equitable and inclusive participation in the democratic process across diverse demographic groups and geographical locations.

2.11 Conclusion

The electoral landscape of Nagaland presents a peculiar phenomenon where female voter turnout consistently surpasses that of men. However, this phenomenon does not necessarily translate into equitable representation within the state legislative assembly, as revealed by empirical findings. To discern the intricacies of gender-based voting behavior, researchers have delved into various factors that could influence female voters' decisions.

One significant factor identified is the predominant role of men in political decision-making processes. This dynamic increases the likelihood of male members dictating the voting behaviors of their families, thereby limiting the autonomy of female voters. Moreover, the study uncovers that a significant portion of female voters, approximately one-third, are motivated by external influences, highlighting a dependence on others when making voting decisions.

Furthermore, the study sheds light on the correlation between age and voter turnout, indicating an increase in voting Per centage with advancing age. However, a contrasting trend emerges concerning educational attainment, where higher levels of education are associated with a decrease in voter participation. This finding underscores the complex interplay between socio-demographic factors and political engagement among voters in Nagaland.

Additionally, the study reveals that married couples exhibit greater activity as voters compared to unmarried individuals, suggesting a potential influence of marital status on political participation. When examining rural and urban voting patterns, no discernible difference is observed among male voters. However, a slightly higher level of engagement is noted among urban female voters relative to their rural counterparts.

In essence, these findings offer valuable insights into the demographics and voting behaviors of Nagaland's electorate. They underscore the nuanced nature of political decision-making processes and caution against simplistic interpretations based solely on raw voter turnout data. Despite the higher overall voter turnout among females, their influence in shaping voting decisions appears to be less pronounced, signaling that broader socio-cultural factors may impede their political agency. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of political dynamics necessitates a deeper exploration of underlying socio-political structures and power dynamics that shape voting behaviors.

Chapter 3

Naga Political Consciousness: Exploring Gender and Political Participation

3.1 Introduction

A foundational prerequisite for citizen engagement and participation in politics is the possession of a basic level of interest in politics, along with a depth of political knowledge and awareness. This chapter delves into the political awareness of respondents, aiming to gauge their familiarity with political matters and related issues. Drawing on insights from Gilligan (1982), Deborah and Nah (2020), it is argued that well-informed citizens tend to exhibit greater resistance to persuasive tactics, demonstrating a heightened resistance to media influence through agenda setting and priming, and are more inclined to be swayed by reasoned arguments rather than mere symbolic displays. Research further suggests that better-informed voters tend to hold more consistent and stable opinions and are adept at discerning their "self-interest properly understood," as articulated by Tocqueville as cited in (Carpini and Keeter, 2016). Consequently, this chapter will scrutinize the extent of political awareness among respondents, examining the possible presence of a gender disparity and delving into whether discrepancies can be linked to variations in political preferences such as media consumption, exposure, and interest. Furthermore, it will evaluate the degrees of political attitudes, including trust in politics, and scrutinize the elements contributing to any inequalities that emerge.

The notion of political awareness spans a wide array of comprehension levels. According to Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), political knowledge encompasses factual insights about politics stored in one's long-term memory. They contend that sustaining optimal levels of political knowledge plays a pivotal role in empowering both individuals and collectives to engage actively in political affairs, assert their interests within the system, and cultivate attitudes grounded in rational analysis rather than mere emotional responses. Their scholarly contributions mark a significant milestone in the ongoing conversation regarding political consciousness and active involvement in political processes.

Various terms have been used to discuss political awareness within scholarly circles, including "*political sophistication*," "*political information*," "*political knowledge*,"

"*civic competence*," and "*political expertise*." Luskin (1990) presents a comprehensive tripartite delineation of political awareness, which incorporates exposure to political information but also the cognitive capacity to process and structure encountered data, and the intrinsic drive to actively seek and comprehend political knowledge. Building on this, Zaller (1992) delves into the essence of political awareness, framing it as the degree to which individuals engage with and grasp political affairs, underscoring the significance of factual insights into politics. Furthermore, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) assert that factual understanding serves manifold purposes: facilitating informed decision-making, nurturing a sense of civic responsibility among the population, and deepening familiarity with bureaucratic structures and political mechanisms.

Additionally, political awareness has been conceived as a fusion of knowledge, interest, and participation (Fiske et al., 1983). This conceptual framework encapsulates three fundamental dimensions: comprehension of the political system, awareness of day-to-day political developments, and acquaintance with political figures, parties, and ideological differentiations (Gronlund, 2007).

The discussed definitions of political awareness provided suggest that individuals' level of awareness about politics significantly influences both the extent and quality of their participation in the political process. In a democracy, where citizens have the opportunity to exert influence over public policy and policymakers, it follows that individuals lacking familiarity with political issues and processes would be less inclined to engage. Due to their limited knowledge, less informed members of the public may struggle to discern their political interests, exhibit lower levels of political participation, and fail to effectively connect their interests to their engagement in politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Furthermore, inadequate awareness of political matters may result in limited engagement in electoral processes.

The significance of political awareness in shaping electoral participation cannot be overstated. In democratic societies, citizens are expected to possess a foundational understanding of the political system within which they exercise their democratic rights and choose their representatives (Niemi & Junn, 1998). Studies have demonstrated that political awareness plays a pivotal role in elucidating variations in political participation (Converse, 2000). Indeed, heightened levels of political

awareness correlate positively with increased engagement in electoral activities (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). A fundamental degree of political awareness is essential for promoting voter engagement. Individuals need to stay informed about relevant political matters, understand the operations of political institutions, and, importantly, comprehend their political rights and duties as active contributors to the political sphere.It is not merely sufficient to comprehend the mechanics of political institutions and processes; rather, individuals must also grasp the significance of the issues at hand. Consequently, those lacking familiarity with politics and its associated matters are less inclined to participate actively in the electoral process. In essence, political awareness serves as the cornerstone for making informed choices, whether in selecting policies or candidates.

Evidently, successful participation in the electoral process relies on voters possessing a specific level of awareness and comprehension regarding political issues and related subjects. This understanding allows them to grasp their political rights, comprehend current political issues, identify their elected officials, understand the functions of political institutions, and comprehend the implications of public policies on their interests more comprehensively. Such awareness might encourage heightened interest in political engagement, as individuals with greater political awareness are more inclined to participate in various electoral activities.

Contemporary scrutiny of political participation is profoundly directed towards unravelling the dynamics of participation itself and discerning the consequential implications of individual engagement. This pursuit is underpinned by two principal theoretical vantage points: the constructive approach and the critical approach, both of which furnish invaluable insights into the multifaceted nature of political participation.

The constructive approach operates within a paradigm wherein political participation is envisaged as a pivotal and affirmative force within society. It espouses the notion that political engagement assumes a foundational role, facilitating a symbiotic equilibrium between the citizenry and their chosen representatives or policymakers. Through active participation, the broader populace gains a conduit to facilitate their discontent and disillusionment, consequently creating an environment conducive to enhanced circumstances. An illustrative perspective from Cornwall and Goetz (2005) articulated

in their work "Democratising Democracy: Feminist Perspectives," underscores the profound significance of political participation for women. Apart from the prospective advantages stemming from effective protests, mobilization, and group advocacy or involvement in policy-making processes, it is underscored that political participation acts as a means of political education for women. It enables them to recognize and express their interests, forge partnerships, reconcile differences, and develop methods of collaborative consensus-building to promote common objectives.

Conversely, the critical approach advances a contrasting stance with regard to mass participation, a view which Marcuse (1941) aptly characterized as a "democratic trick." Advocates of this perspective contend that wholesale mass participation may not be inherently indispensable and, in some instances, might engender societal turbulence and disorder. This viewpoint posits that affording citizens a platform to express their negative sentiments through political engagement could potentially yield adverse consequences, thereby questioning the overarching significance of such participation.

3.2 Notion of political participation

The definition of political participation varies among different authors and is influenced by their understanding of the modes of political participation. Participation is considered a crucial component of human development. According to Karl (1995), "participation" encompasses the involvement of individuals in economic, social, cultural, and political processes that influence their lives, ranging from complete and direct control to partial or indirect influence over these processes. It is argued that individuals should consistently possess access to decision-making and authority. Building on this, Huntington (1971) posits that political modernization paves the way for new societal factions to engage politically as political consciousness spreads throughout the population. Aligning with this perspective, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) delineates four interconnected forms of participation in its "Human Development Report (HDR) 1993": household, economic, sociocultural, and political participation. Furthermore, Palmer (1976) defines political participation as the active involvement of citizens in political endeavors aimed at shaping the conduct and decisions of policymakers.

According to Puri (2004) "Participation, irrespective of its goals, is in itself a fuzzy concept having acquired varied meanings over a period of time". On one end of the spectrum, it may denote mere nominal affiliation with a group, while on the other, it signifies wielding a significant influence in decision-making processes. Participation manifests in diverse forms, spanning from direct to indirect, comprehensive to partial, nominal to substantial involvement across various facets of life, be it private or public. Such engagement holds profound implications for both individuals and communities at large. In contemporary political discourse, participation emerges as a vital element in nurturing individual intellect through the exchange of ideas, debates, ideologies, and practical initiatives. Nonetheless, the ethical underpinnings of participation warrant scrutiny, as it may not invariably serve the collective good but rather individual interests. This self-serving form of participation may not bode well for societal well-being. Participation can assume either constructive or destructive roles contingent upon its intent and character. Constructive engagement has the potential to enrich knowledge and cultivate personal fulfilment while contributing to the greater good of society. Kluienko (2007) explores the utilization of the Guttman dimension Continuity Scale in assessing political participation, highlighting the attribution of its emergence by many scholars to the evolution of traditional society, as evidenced in modernization theories. On the other hand, participation can take a destructive turn when motivated by personal gain or pursued through violent means. Such engagement has the potential to sow chaos in society and impede human progress. Political participation, among various forms of engagement, is defined by the International Encyclopaedia of Social Science as voluntary actions through which members of a society partake in selecting leaders and shaping public policies, whether directly or indirectly. Similarly, the International Encyclopaedia of Government and Politics characterizes political participation as encompassing citizen interactions with the government, aimed at conveying their needs to public officials through active engagement with governance processes, with the hope of having those needs met. These definitions underscore the voluntary aspect of political participation, which may entail direct or indirect participation in the selection of representatives or leaders. Furthermore, political participation is perceived as a means of involvement to positively influence decision-makers or leaders in anticipation of receiving favorable outcomes in return.

3.3 Characteristics of political participation

To grasp political participation comprehensively, one must account for its varying degrees across different tiers of government within a federal framework. In such a structure, authority is distributed among national, state, district, and local levels. According to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, political participation entails the involvement of individuals and groups in the political process across these distinct levels. Lester (1965) conceptualizes political participation in a hierarchical manner, with different levels allowing for varying degrees of involvement. Milbrath asserts that political participation is a personal endeavor that entails communicating with others and responding to external political influences. Given that individuals possess unique traits, the effects of stimuli and interaction differ from one person to another. Additionally, Milbrath provides further insight into political participation as an individual endeavor shaped by communication and external political influences. As individuals possess unique characteristics, the impact of stimuli and interaction varies. Milbrath and Goel (1977) emphasize the individualistic nature of political participation and the significance of external influences. Marcia delineates a political participant as someone belonging to an organized group striving to elect officials or influence governmental policies, or an individual holding public office through election or appointment. Political participation encompasses engagement in politics, regardless of the mode, with the aim of directly or indirectly influencing decision-making processes. It fluctuates over time, situational contexts, and personal inclinations, influenced by internal and external factors. Desai and Krishnaraj (2010) underscore that political participation encompasses all voluntary actions aimed at shaping public policymaking, the administration of public affairs, and the selection of political leaders across all levels of governance.

3.4 Types of political participation

Over time, the concept of political participation has undergone significant changes, incorporating a wide range of engagement modes within a comprehensive framework. According to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, political participation encompasses a spectrum of activities, which extend beyond mere voting.

These activities include seeking information, engaging in discourse, participating in political events, attending meetings, making financial contributions, and interacting with representatives.

Conventional political participation, the more traditional facet, encompasses formal affiliation with a political party, voter mobilization and registration, composition of speeches, involvement in campaigns, and pursuit of public and party positions. The conventional notion of political participation was centered on established modes such as voting, which historically signified the quintessential form of citizen engagement in selecting governing authorities. Initial empirical investigations, particularly those conducted by American political scholars, predominantly centered around conventional political actions, encompassing voting, political discussions with peers, engagement in party and interest group activities, and communication with elected officials or administrators. Notably, these early analyses often omitted the consideration of unconventional political behaviour, such as acts of protest and even instances of political violence, which lay outside the conventional purview. The progression of thought in the field later expanded the scope of political participation to encompass non-traditional forms, including protest activities and expressions of political dissent. Another noteworthy framework was advanced by Verba and Nie (1972) defining political participation to encompass activities spanning discussions on political matters, communication with local and national authorities, active participation in electoral campaigns, affiliating with political organizations and parties. Barnes and Kaase (1979) pioneered a systematic cross-national exploration of protest engagement. Verba (1995) on the other hand, highlighted that political participation encompasses various actions, ranging from voting and voluntary contributions to campaigns to engaging with public officials, participating in protests, involving in informal community endeavors, and affiliating with political entities. Voting is often perceived as the most diminutive resource-intensive form of participation within this spectrum of activities, sometimes regarded as a passive exercise.

Nevertheless, Milbrath (1965) introduced a hierarchical taxonomy of political activities, arranging them in tiers of gladiatorial activities (direct political engagement), transitional activities, spectator activities, and apathetic disengagement. This schema,

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while informative, may not universally apply as individuals engaging in spectator activities could concurrently partake in other more active forms. Furthermore, the contemporary exploration of political participation necessitates an inclusive definition encompassing all actions to influence policymakers or the political system. Gender differences in participation have gained prominence, underlining concerns about disparate participation rates among various groups, which could potentially undermine the principle of equal representation. Modern political thought posits political participation as a channel through which citizens convey their preferences and requirements to decision-makers. Consequently, unconventional participation, encompassing protests and demonstrations, is increasingly recognized as a vehicle for expressing political consciousness and a conscious grasp of public policy issues, with the aim of influencing decision-makers and policy outcomes.

Almond and Verba (1963) advocate that citizens within contemporary democratic societies are expected to partake in political dialogues, exhibit political interest, vote, possess political knowledge, and feel empowered to influence governance and public affairs. Easton's (1965) "systems analysis" highlights the importance of input and output mechanisms within the political structure. In this context, unconventional political participation assumes a more nuanced role, not merely as a subversive act but as a constructive means of holding policymakers accountable to their constituencies. Kumari (2006) characterizes political participation as 'embodying citizens' informed awareness of political matters and their sense of personal agency in shaping outcomes. Political participation could manifest in foundational acts like voting or extend to more organized forms of engagement such as protests, campaign involvement, or even candidacy. Wagle (2006) further underscores the breadth of political participation, encompassing an array of activities throughout the political process. Electoral participation serves as an indicator not only of public sentiments toward candidates and parties but also of perceptions concerning governmental actions.

3.5 Political Engagement of Women: A Gender-Democratic Framework

In democratic societies, the pursuit of equality among citizens is a fundamental goal for the efficient operation of the political system. Examining governance, leadership, and political involvement from a gender-transformative perspective involves recognizing women as capable decision-makers essential to the democratization of their societies. This study delves into the concepts of political participation, inclusion, and exclusion from both democratic and gender-feminist perspectives, recognizing the interconnectedness of "*political participation*," "*democracy*," and "*gender*."

The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (2005) underscores the significance of political participation of women's, activism, and good governance to development and democracy agendas. Within the contemporary democratic paradigm, political power emanates from the sovereign people, with the stability of government contingent upon their support, as democratic principles espouse popular sovereignty.The vitality and efficacy of democracy extend beyond the mere presence of men and women in political power; it hinges on the extent of opportunities and space afforded to women within the democratic structure. If equality and liberty serve as the bedrock of democracy, then the participation of both genders ensures its credibility and efficacy. Huntington (1971) suggests a positive correlation between political participation and democracy, emphasizing that freedom and equality are pivotal in shaping its trajectory. Within democratic systems, the discourse on political participation has been robustly debated, necessitating a redefinition of inclusion and exclusion to carve out visible avenues for both men's and women's political engagement. Recognizing human rights mandates effective citizen participation at all levels, underscoring the fundamental human right of equal participation in the political process devoid of discrimination. Women's rights, regarded as human rights, underscore a critical demand of the feminist movement.

In Miles (2002) passionate advocacy Women's equal acknowledgment in society emerges as a catalyst for transformative shifts in both production and politics, aligning with the pursuit of individual self-fulfillment. Stivens (2006) illuminates the intricate interplay between women's rights and broader human rights, heralding an exciting

expansion of the human rights agenda to encompass gender and sexuality issues. This evolution signifies a deepening recognition of the intrinsic connection between feminist politics and the wider human rights discourse. As democracy is conceived as governance by the people, inquiries naturally surface regarding the inclusivity of decision-making processes. Tickner (2010) argues that viewing democracy through a gendered lens exposes the limitations and constraints inherent in traditional definitions of democracy. These discussions underscore the critical importance of gender equality in promoting meaningful democratic processes and participation. Contemporary political thought delves deeply into the significance of political participation, framing it not only as indispensable for human development but also as a cornerstone for holding political systems accountable to their populace. Through these lenses, the discourse surrounding gender, politics, and democracy gains depth, emphasizing the imperative of inclusivity and equity in shaping resilient and responsive political structures.

At the heart of democratic governance lies the essential entitlement to participate, a foundational element intertwined with other democratic tenets including consent, accountability, majority rule, equality, and popular sovereignty. The vigor of democracy depends on the extent of political involvement among its populace and its capacity to address their varied requirements. Proponents of participatory democracy contend that citizen engagement is indispensable for the functioning of democratic system. Echoing the sentiments of Rousseau and Mill, participatory democracy is heralded as a catalyst for human development. Jhartha (1996) suggests that political participation serves as a key player for the success of democratic governance, setting it apart from alternative forms of government. These assertions underscore the critical nexus between political engagement, gender equality, and the efficacy of democratic structures. Indeed, democracy devoid of active citizen involvement would be devoid of substance. Citizen participation not only imbues democracy with significance but also lays the groundwork for development strategies centered around the population. Adopting a gender-democratic lens, it becomes apparent that true democratic functionality is contingent upon equal participation from both genders. Political parity ensures the efficacy and accountability of both governing bodies and their constituents.

Thus, democratizing state institutions and bolstering citizen involvement are paramount in promoting good governance and sustaining democratic vitality.

3.6 Results and Findings

To gauge the level of political awareness among respondents, inquiries were made concerning historical and political figures, electoral history and structure, as well as current government and local representation within the context of Nagaland politics. Acquiring suck knowledge necessitates a certain degree of attentiveness and absorption of political affairs. A scale of political awareness was devised to classify voters into three categories: high, medium, and low political awareness. This classification was determined by tallying the number of correct responses to political awareness questions for each individual voter, regardless of their voting status. Each correct response was accorded one point. While the questions did not encompass all conceivable pertinent issues and facts, they did encompass a broad spectrum of inquiries pertaining to various aspects of politics and associated matters influencing political awareness. Fig. 3.1, presents the overall political awareness in relation to gender.

Fig. 3.1 Political Awareness and Gender
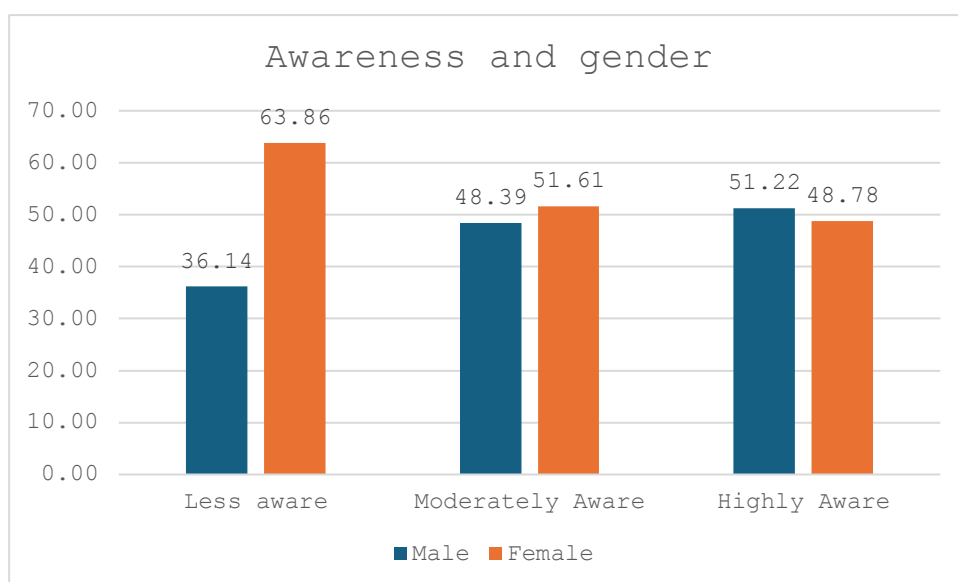
Source: *Survey report*

The data in Fig 3.1 indicates that 63.86 Per cent of individuals categorized as "Less Aware" are female, while only 36.14 Per cent are male, highlighting a gender disparity in awareness levels favoring females. In the "Moderately Aware" category, 48.39 Per cent are male and 51.61 Per cent are female, showing a relatively balanced distribution between genders. Moreover, in the "Highly Aware" category, 51.22 Per cent are male and 48.78 Per cent are female, suggesting a slightly higher representation of males, though the difference is less pronounced compared to the "Less Aware" category. Overall, the data suggests that there may be gender-based differences in awareness levels, particularly with females being more prevalent in the "Less Aware" group. Further investigation into the factors influencing these disparities could provide valuable insights into addressing potential gaps in awareness between genders.

Table 3.1 Political Consciousness and Educational Qualification by Gender

Educational Qualification	Low awareness level		Moderate awareness level		High awareness level	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Illiterate	40.00%	46.67%	27.50%	26.67%	32.50%	26.68%
Primary	48.48%	55.56%	36.36%	38.89%	15.15%	5.56%
Undergraduate	24.64%	22.62%	49.28%	53.57%	26.09%	23.81%
Graduate and above	1.56 %	2.53 %	31.25 %	24.05%	67.19%	73.42%

Source: *Survey report*

From table 3.1 it is evident that there are distinctions in awareness levels among different educational qualifications and genders. Notably, the data suggests a trend where higher educational qualifications correspond with increased levels of awareness

across both genders. This trend aligns with existing research highlighting the positive relationship between education and political awareness.

Specifically, within the male category, the highest proportions of high awareness are observed among those with graduate and above qualifications (67.19Per cent), followed by undergraduate (49.28Per cent), primary (15.15Per cent), and illiterate (32.5 Per cent) individuals. Similarly, among females, the trend indicates that higher educational qualifications correlate with heightened levels of awareness, with the highest Per centages of high awareness seen in the graduate and above category (73.42Per cent), followed by undergraduate (53.57Per cent), primary (5.56Per cent), and illiterate (26.68Per cent) groups.

Comparatively, within each educational qualification level, females generally exhibit slightly higher Per centages of high awareness than males. This phenomenon could be attributed to various factors, including socialization processes, access to information, and societal expectations, which may influence females' engagement with political issues.

Furthermore, it is notable that while the disparities in awareness levels among different educational qualifications are evident, there remain substantial proportions of individuals across all categories with low to moderate awareness levels. This indicates a need for targeted interventions and educational initiatives aimed at enhancing political awareness, particularly among the groups with lower educational attainment.

In conclusion, the analysis underlines the significance of educational qualification in shaping political awareness levels, with higher qualifications generally associated with greater awareness. Additionally, the data highlights gender differentials in awareness levels, suggesting the importance of considering gender dynamics in political education and outreach efforts.

Fig. 3.2 District wise Political Awareness and Age
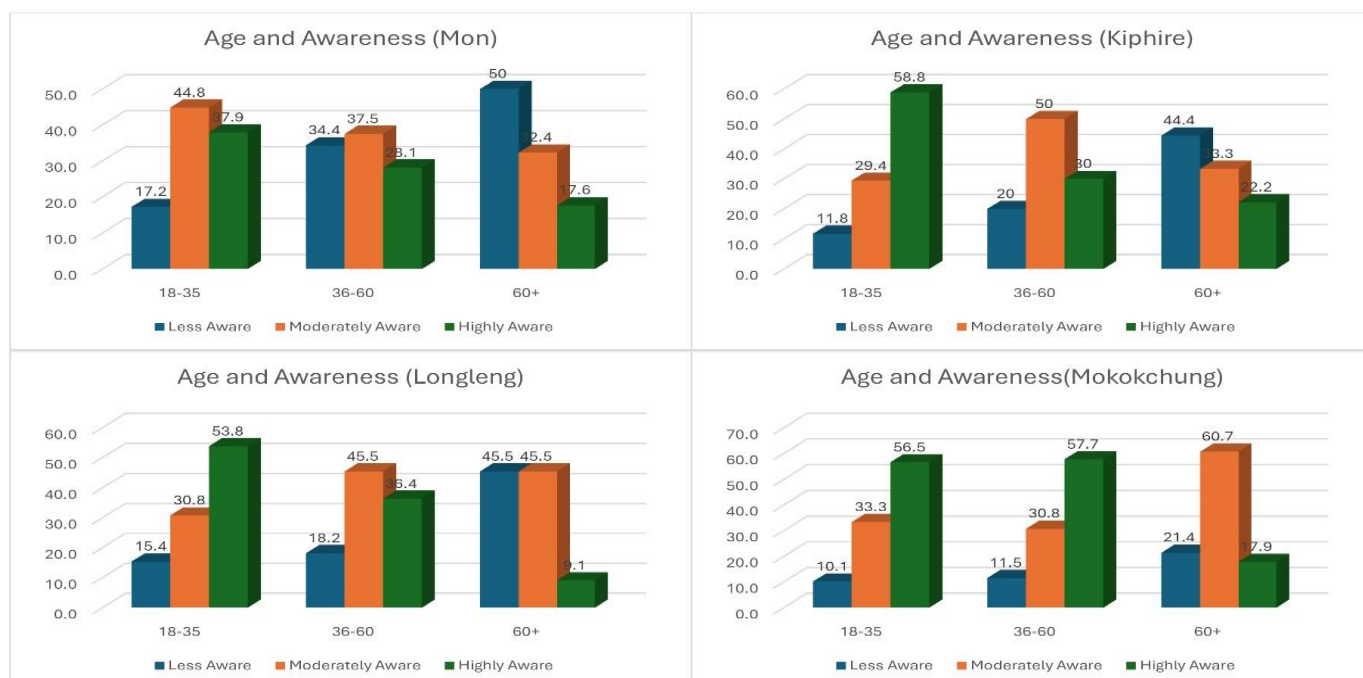
Source: *Survey report*

Fig. 3.2 shows the level of political awareness in the four districts of Nagaland namely Mon, Kiphire, Longleng and Mokokchung in relation to age categorized into three age groups i.e 18-35, 36-60 and 60 and above. The given data highlight shows that age groups 18-35 shows that as political awareness go up so does the number of aware populations except in Mon district where there is a slight dip from Moderately Aware to Highly Aware. When coming to the age group 36-60 the concentration of the population is more in the moderately aware category except in Mokokchung district where Highly Aware has the highest concentration. In this age category most of the population is either Moderately or Highly Aware. Coming to Above 60 age category the Less Aware category is higher except in Mokokchung district with Highly Aware having the lowest concentration. This study gives a clear trend that there is a relation between age and political awareness where young people seem to exhibit a higher level of political awareness.

Fig. 3.3 District wise Political Awareness and Gender
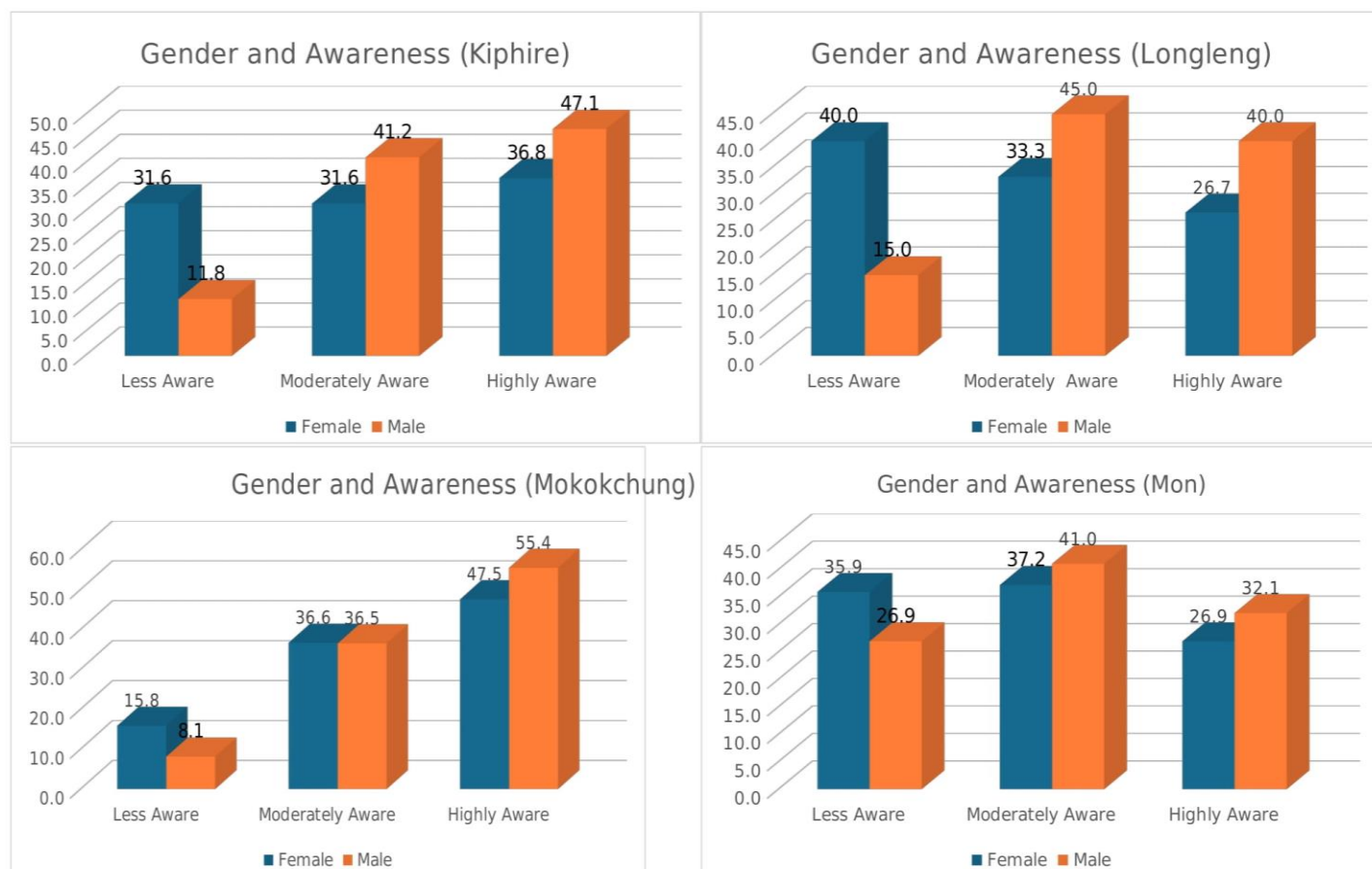
Source: *Survey report*

Fig 3.3 studies district wise political awareness and gender. In the figure uniformity can be seen when it comes to political awareness and gender between and within the districts. In all the study districts women dominates the less aware category. However, there is less awareness gap in the districts of Mokokchung and Mon. The trend also shows that as awareness level increases so does the number of awared men. The findings provide a clear and compelling indication that a significant disparity exists between genders with respect to political awareness. This suggests that men and women do not engage with or have access to political information and discourse on an equal footing, highlighting the persistent gender-based inequalities.

Fig. 3.4 District wise Political participation and Awareness Index
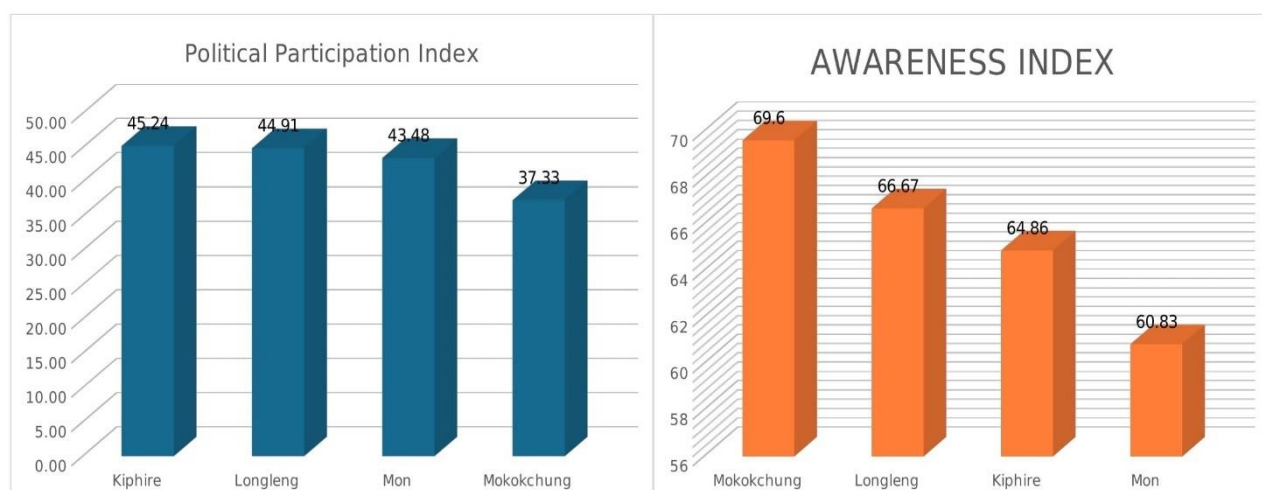
Source: *Survey report*

Figure 3.4 presents a comparative analysis of the Political Participation Index and the Political Awareness Index across four districts Kiphire, Longleng, Mon, and Mokokchung. The data reveal that Kiphire, Longleng, and Mon exhibit relatively similar levels of political participation, while Mokokchung stands out with a significantly lower participation index. However, this trend is reversed in the case of political awareness. Mokokchung records the highest awareness index among the four districts, followed by the others. Notably, despite Kiphire's relatively low level of political awareness, it demonstrates the highest level of political participation. These

contrasting patterns suggest that higher political awareness does not necessarily translate into greater political participation. This observation challenges the commonly held assumption of a direct, positive correlation between awareness and participation, highlighting the need to examine other socio-cultural or institutional factors that may influence political engagement.

Table: 3.2 ANOVA (Awareness Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6402.346	3	2134.115	4.291	.005
Within Groups	197938.0	398	497.332		
Total	204340.3	401			

The provided table 3.2 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA test conducted to examine the differences in political participation across four districts. The analysis reveals a significant variation in political participation among the districts, as evidenced by the notable F-statistic(F=4.291) and the associated p-value (p=.005). This indicates that there are visible differences in political engagement across the districts under study. Subsequent analysis focused separately on men and women. Interestingly, while there was no significant difference observed in the political participation of women across the districts, indicating a consistent level of participation irrespective of factors such as tribe, region, or community, whereas on the other hand there was a significant disparity in the political engagement of men. This suggests that men's roles in political participation may vary more significantly across different contexts compared to women, whose participation appears relatively consistent.

Moreover, when considering political awareness, the ANOVA test revealed significant disparities in awareness levels among the studied districts. Notably, a gender-based

analysis revealed a consistent trend across the four districts: women consistently exhibited higher levels of political awareness in the less aware category, whereas men tended to have higher awareness levels in the moderately and highly aware categories. This persistent trend suggests a gender disparity in political awareness, with men generally being more politically informed than women across the studied districts. Overall, these findings shed light on the nuanced dynamics of political participation and awareness, highlighting both similarities and differences between men and women across various socio-political contexts.

Table 3.3 presents a post hoc analysis focusing on the political participation levels across various districts, including Mokokchung, Mon, Longleng, and Kiphire. The table highlights the mean differences in political engagement between pairs of districts, alongside standard errors and confidence intervals. The significant mean difference between Mokokchung and Mon suggests distinct levels of political involvement among residents. This variance could stem from differing degrees of community organization, local leadership influence, or access to political resources within these districts. Conversely, the absence of significant differences between certain district pairs, like Longleng and Kiphire, might indicate shared socio-cultural factors or similar political dynamics influencing participation levels. Such insights derived from the analysis provide valuable information for understanding the nuanced nuances of political engagement within the region.

Table 3.3 Multiple Comparison

Dependent Variable:

LSD

		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95 Per cent Confidence Interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Mokokchung	Mon	8.76667*	2.45559	.000	3.9391	13.5942
	Longleng	2.93333	4.08126	.473	-5.0902	10.9568
	Kiphire	4.74286	4.12933	.251	-3.3752	12.8609
Mon	Mokokchung	-8.76667*	2.45559	.000	-13.5942	-3.9391
	Longleng	-5.83333	4.12344	.158	-13.9398	2.2731
	Kiphire	-4.02381	4.17103	.335	-12.2238	4.1762
Longleng	Mokokchung	-2.93333	4.08126	.473	-10.9568	5.0902
	Mon	5.83333	4.12344	.158	-2.2731	13.9398
	Kiphire	1.80952	5.29379	.733	-8.5978	12.2168

Kiphire	Mokokchung	-4.74286	4.12933	.251	-12.8609	3.3752
	Mon	4.02381	4.17103	.335	-4.1762	12.2238
	Longleng	-1.80952	5.29379	.733	-12.2168	8.5978

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3.4 presents the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted on the Political Participation of Women Index. The ANOVA assesses the variation in political participation levels among women across different groups. The table provides the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean squares, F-value, and significance level. The between-groups analysis indicates that there is some variation in political participation levels among women across the groups, as indicated by a moderately high F-value of 2.564. However, the associated p-value of .056 suggests that this difference is not statistically significant at the conventional threshold of .05. This implies that while there may be some variation in political participation among the groups, it is not strong enough to be confidently distinguished from random variation.

While ANOVA suggests some degree of variation, the lack of statistical significance indicates that factors other than the groups examined may be influencing women's political participation. Field survey data shed light on potential reasons behind this lack of significant differences, such as overarching socio-cultural factors, systemic barriers to women's political engagement, or uniform levels of access to political resources across the groups.

Table 3.4 ANOVA (Political Participation of women Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1204.384	3	401.461	2.564	.056
Within Groups	30058.371	192	156.554		
Total	31262.755	195			

Table 3.5 presents the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted on the Political Participation of Men Index. This analysis aims to understand the variation in political participation levels among men across different groups. The table provides the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean squares, F-value, and significance level. The between-groups analysis indicates a significant variation in political participation levels among men across the groups, as indicated by a relatively high F-value of 5.522. The associated p-value of .001 is below the conventional threshold of .05, indicating that this difference is statistically significant.

The significant variation in men's political participation levels suggests that there are distinct differences in their engagement across the studied groups. This could be attributed to various factors identified through field survey data. For instance, socio-cultural norms and expectations may play a role in shaping men's participation in political activities, with different groups having varying cultural contexts that influence their attitudes towards political engagement. Additionally, systemic barriers such as unequal access to resources, economic disparities, and differential levels of education may impact men's ability to participate in political processes. The field survey identified several factors contributing to the observed differences in men's political participation across the studied groups. Through interviews and observations, it became apparent that community attitudes play a crucial role in shaping men's engagement in

political processes. In districts where there is a strong tradition of community involvement and active participation in governance, men tend to be more politically engaged, viewing it as a civic duty and a means to enact change within their communities.

Table 3.5 ANOVA (Political Participation of men Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2256.106	3	752.035	5.522	.001
Within Groups	27510.340	202	136.190		
Total	29766.445	205			

Table 3.6 presents the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted on the Political Participation Index, aiming to understand the variation in political participation levels across different groups. The between-group analysis indicates a significant variation in political participation levels among the groups, as evidenced by a relatively high F-value of 8.130. Additionally, the associated p-value of .000, being less than the conventional threshold of .05, confirms that this difference is statistically significant.

The significant variation observed in the Political Participation Index suggests that there are distinct differences in political engagement among the groups studied. Field survey data can offer insights into the factors contributing to these variations. For instance, community attitudes towards political involvement, leadership structures, and access to resources may vary across different groups, influencing their levels of political participation. Communities with strong traditions of civic engagement and inclusive leadership structures may exhibit higher levels of political participation compared to

those with more centralized power dynamics and limited access to resources. Furthermore, socio-economic factors such as education, income levels, and employment opportunities can also play a significant role in shaping political engagement. Districts with higher levels of education and economic prosperity may have more informed and politically active populations, whereas areas with lower socio-economic indicators may experience greater challenges in mobilizing citizens for political participation.

Table 3.6 ANOVA (Political Participation Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4025.799	3	1341.933	8.130	.000
Within Groups	65690.416	398	165.051		
Total	69716.215	401			

Table 3.7 presents a post hoc analysis, aiming to provide insight into specific differences in political participation between pairs of districts. The table displays mean differences, standard errors, significance levels, and confidence intervals for comparisons between Mokokchung, Mon, Longleng, and Kiphire.

Significant mean differences are denoted by stars, indicating a noteworthy distinction in political engagement between the compared districts. For instance, the significant mean difference between Mokokchung and Mon (-6.85583, $p < 0.05$) suggests that residents of these districts exhibit notably different levels of political participation. Similarly, the significant mean difference between Mokokchung and Longleng (-

5.00907, p < 0.05) indicates significant differences in political engagement between these districts.

On the other hand, non-significant mean differences, such as those between Mon and Longleng, suggest similarities in political dynamics or shared socio-cultural factors influencing participation levels. The absence of significance between these pairs may indicate that despite being different districts, their political engagement levels are statistically similar. The reasons behind these differences could be multifaceted. Factors such as districts with stronger community networks and more accessible political resources may witness higher levels of political engagement compared to those with weaker community ties and limited resources. Additionally, socio-cultural factors, historical contexts, and geographic considerations could also play a role in shaping political participation patterns across districts.

Overall, the multiple comparison analysis provides valuable insights into the nuanced differences in political participation between districts, helping policymakers and stakeholders identify areas for targeted interventions and strategies to promote more inclusive and equitable political engagement within the region.

Table: 3.7 Multiple Comparison

Dependent Variable:

LSD

		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95 Per cent Confidence Interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
Mokokchung	Mon	-6.85583*	1.41463	.000	-9.6369	-4.0748
	Longleng	-5.00907*	2.35115	.034	-9.6313	-.3868
	Kiphire	-4.61224	2.37884	.053	-9.2889	.0644
Mon	Mokokchung	6.85583*	1.41463	.000	4.0748	9.6369
	Longleng	1.84676	2.37545	.437	-2.8232	6.5168
	Kiphire	2.24359	2.40287	.351	-2.4803	6.9675
Longleng	Mokokchung	5.00907*	2.35115	.034	.3868	9.6313

	Mon	-1.84676	2.37545	.437	-6.5168	2.8232
	Kiphire	.39683	3.04967	.897	-5.5987	6.3923
Kiphire	Mokokchung	4.61224	2.37884	.053	-.0644	9.2889
	Mon	-2.24359	2.40287	.351	-6.9675	2.4803
	Longleng	-.39683	3.04967	.897	-6.3923	5.5987

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

3.7 Women's Role in Naga Society: Beyond Electoral Politics

Understanding the roles played by women in political participation beyond voting is crucial for comprehensively assessing gender dynamics in political engagement. While voting provides a fundamental measure of civic participation; and this study also show that men and women typically participate on equal footing in terms of voting whereas other forms of political engagement may exhibit disparities between genders. Thus, it is essential to investigate various political activities to capture the full spectrum of participation and discern potential gender gaps.

In this study, the researcher endeavors to explore the involvement of both men and women in diverse political activities beyond voting. These activities include campaigning, attending meetings, being official members of political parties, fundraising for parties or candidates, and any other political engagements. By examining these activities, the study aims to shed light on the extent and nature of gender disparities in political participation, as well as the roles and contributions of both genders in shaping political processes and outcomes.

Campaigning: Campaigning entails active involvement in advocating for political candidates or causes, such as canvassing, organizing events, or disseminating campaign

materials. By examining the participation of men and women in campaigning, the study can uncover potential differences in their levels of political activism and engagement with electoral processes.

Attending Meetings: Participation in electoral meetings, town halls, or community forums provides opportunities for individuals to voice their opinions, engage in political discourse, and interact with political representatives. Assessing the attendance of men and women at such meetings allows for an understanding of their involvement in shaping political agendas and decision-making processes.

Official member of Political Parties: Being a member in political parties signifies a deeper level of commitment to political engagement and party politics. Examining the gender composition of party memberships can illuminate disparities in political party representation and influence, as well as the barriers faced by women in accessing and participating in party structures.

Fundraising: Fundraising activities, such as collecting funds for political parties or candidates, are integral to financing political campaigns and activities. Analyzing the involvement of men and women in fundraising efforts can reveal disparities in access to financial resources and political networks, as well as the gendered nature of fundraising strategies and expectations.

Other Political Activities: Beyond the above-mentioned activities, the study aims to explore any other forms of political engagement undertaken by men and women. This inclusive approach allows for the identification of additional avenues through which individuals contribute to political processes and civic life, as well as potential disparities in opportunities for political participation.

By comprehensively assessing these various forms of political participation, the study seeks to deepen understanding of gender dynamics in political engagement and identify areas for promoting gender equality and inclusivity in political processes. Through rigorous analysis and interpretation of the data, the study aims to generate insights that can inform policy interventions, advocacy efforts, and scholarly discourse aimed at advancing more equitable and representative democracies.

Fig. 3.5 Distribution of Political Participation Activities by Gender

CAMPAIGNING
■Yes ■No

	MALE	FEMALE
No	66.50	90.82
Yes	33.50	9.18

ELECTORAL MEETINGS
■Yes ■No

	MALE	FEMALE
No	24.27	59.18
Yes	75.73	40.82

MEMBER OF A POLITICAL PARTY
■Yes ■No

	MALE	FEMALE
No	62.14	82.65
Yes	37.86	17.35

COLLECTING OF FUNDS
■Yes ■No

	MALE	FEMALE
No	95.15	97.45
Yes	4.85	2.55
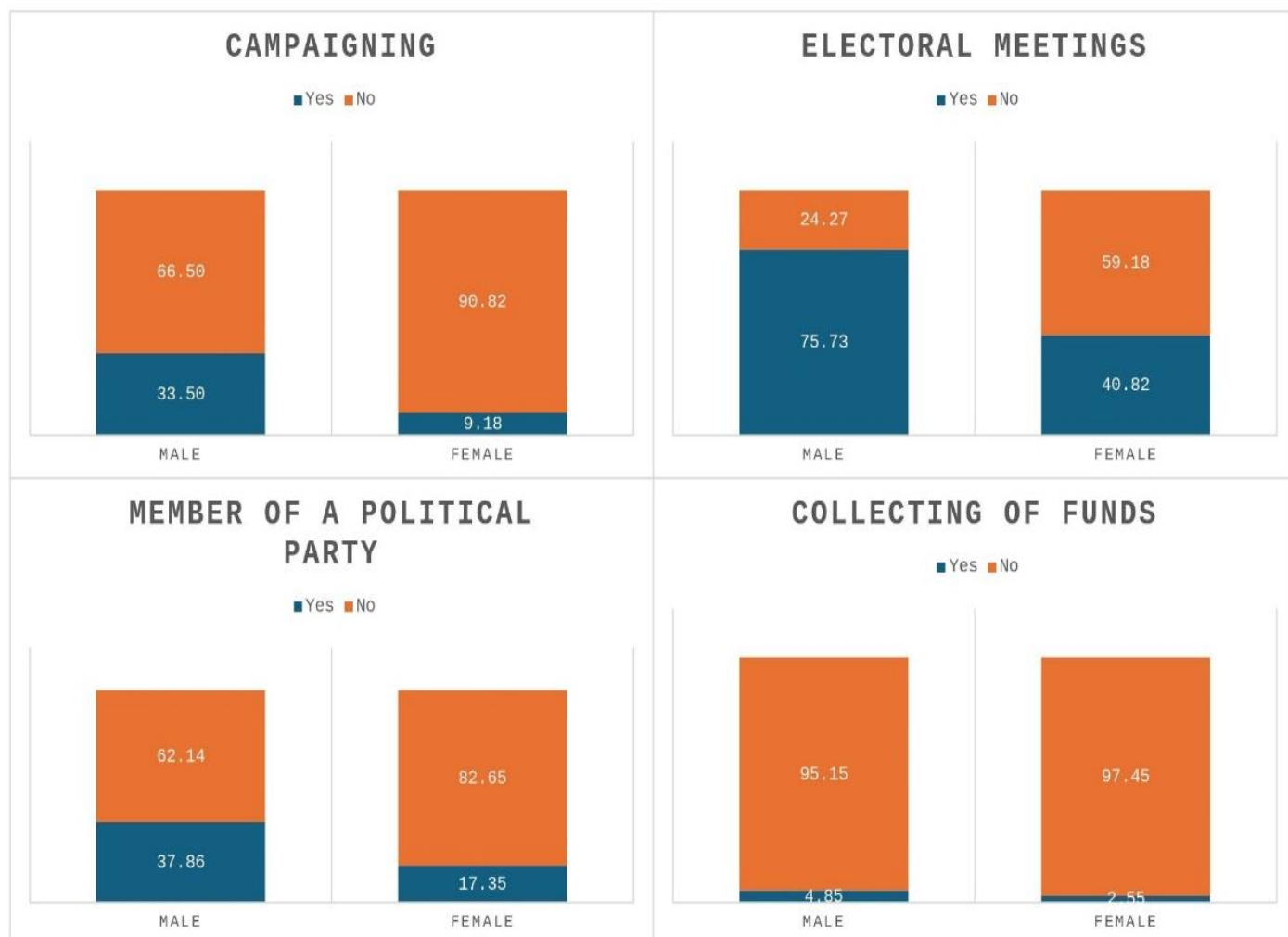
Source: *Survey report*

Fig. 3.5.1 Distribution of Political Participation Activities by Gender

OTHER ACTIVITIES

■ Yes ■ No

95.15	96.43
4.85	3.57
MALE	FEMALE
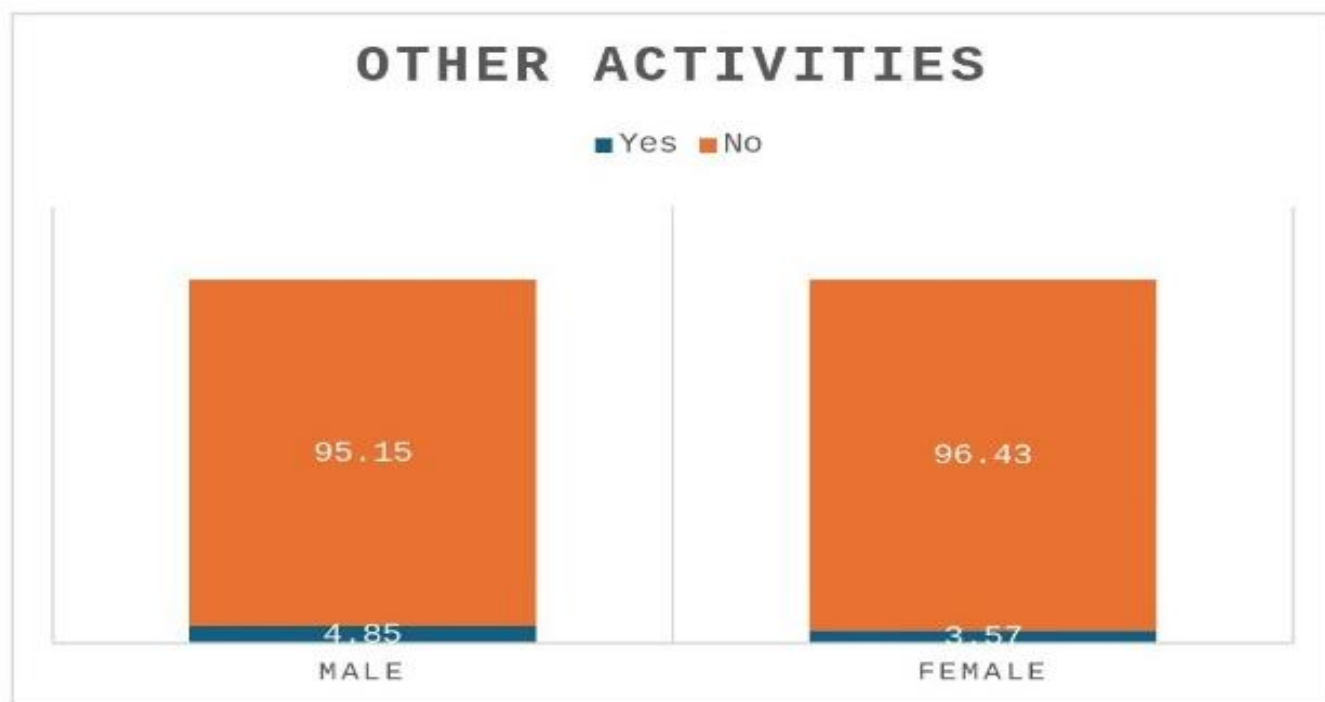
Source: *Survey report*

The data comparing how men and women participate in politics paints a clear picture where there's a noticeable difference in how active they are. Men tend to be more involved across the board. Whether it's campaigning, attending meetings, or joining political parties, men consistently show higher participation rates. On the flip side, both men and women don't seem too keen on collecting funds for political causes. This data highlights a gender gap in political engagement. It suggests that women might face more barriers or feel less encouraged to get involved in politics compared to men. To bridge this gap, we need to tackle things like societal expectations, making resources more accessible, and removing obstacles that hold women back from taking part in political activities. By addressing these issues, we can create a more inclusive and

representative political landscape where everyone feels empowered to participate, regardless of gender.

The reasons behind the notable gender gap in political participation, as observed through the field survey, can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, societal expectations and norms play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviors regarding political engagement. The survey suggests that women may face greater pressure or discouragement from societal norms that prioritize traditional gender roles, thus impacting their willingness to participate in politics. Additionally, access to resources and opportunities also emerges as a critical factor influencing political engagement. Women may encounter barriers such as limited access to financial resources, or networks, which can hinder their ability to engage actively in political activities. Furthermore, the survey highlights the importance of addressing institutional barriers that disproportionately affect women, such as biased recruitment processes or inadequate representation in decision-making bodies. These factors collectively contribute to a systemic imbalance in political participation, where women are often marginalized or underrepresented. To address this disparity, it is essential to implement targeted interventions aimed at dismantling these barriers, promoting gender equality, and creating a more inclusive political environment where all individuals, regardless of gender, can fully participate and contribute to the political process.

On the question asked on the roles played by women in the Naga society some significant roles that women play that were stated by the respondents are (Both male and female)

Religious Activities: One of the most common responses received from both men and women regarding the role of women in society was the active involvement of women in church activities. But even in the church institution usually the decision makers i.e. the Pastors and Deacons in the church are usually men.

Economic Upliftment: Many women also responded about being involved in contributing to the economy through entrepreneurship, involvement in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and participation in business activities.

Social Welfare: Women are actively engaged in social welfare activities, advocating for crime against women and children, and combating social evils through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and women welfare societies. These organizations, often referred to as women tribal bodies, extend their roles to include peacekeeping efforts and combating social evils within society through various community initiatives.

Cultural Preservation: Women play a role in preserving the morals, cultures, and values of Naga society, passing them down from generation to generation.

Besides their involvement in politics, women in Naga society serve as pillars of strength in various domains, including economics, social welfare, family care, cultural preservation, and peacebuilding. Their diverse contributions shape the fabric of society, advancing collective growth, unity, and progress.

3.8 Conclusion:

The study utilized a one-way ANOVA test to examine political participation across four districts, revealing significant differences. A subsequent one-way ANOVA test for gender indicated that women's political participation was consistent across districts, suggesting a uniform role for women regardless of tribal, regional, or community differences. In contrast, men's political participation varied significantly, implying more dynamic roles in political engagement.

Regarding political awareness, the analysis showed a significant disparity among the districts. A gender-based comparison within the four districts revealed a pattern: females consistently outnumbered males in the less aware category, while males predominated in the moderately and highly aware categories, indicating higher political awareness among men.

Age-related trends in political awareness showed that individuals aged 18-35 were the most aware, followed by those aged 36-60, and then those over 60.

An awareness and political participation index developed for the districts demonstrated an inverse relationship: districts with higher awareness had lower participation rates, and the district with the lowest awareness had the highest participation rate.

In conclusion, the study highlights distinct patterns of political participation and awareness based on gender, age, and district, with the notable finding that increased awareness does not necessarily correlate with higher political participation. This suggests that other factors may influence the decision to engage in political activities.

Chapter 4

Factors Influencing Women's Political Participation in Nagaland: A Comprehensive Examination

4.1 Introduction

Achieving parity in the political engagement of women is often perceived as the fundamental perquisite for upholding the principles of democratic governance (Hassim, 2016). Nevertheless, the continued marginalization of women in the political sphere persists, owing to a multitude of barriers rooted in diverse normative frameworks. Global trends throughout the years have indicated that the female population may be the determining element in elections by comprising the swing vote which is true in the case of the state of Nagaland as well. It also implies that with each passing election, female voter turnout will be higher than ever before. While this may appear to be a positive outcome on the surface, one must scrutinize and ask if a rise in numbers really translates into greater meaningful political engagement.

The data presented in the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2023) report underscores the persistent gender disparity within the realm of global politics. Despite incremental progress, women continue to lag their male counterparts in political representation. The global average of 26.5 Per cent female representation in the single/lower house reflects a substantial gap, signaling an enduring challenge to achieving gender parity in political spheres. Within the Nordic countries, often lauded for their progressive policies, the 45.7 Per cent representation in the single/lower house remains an exception rather than the rule. The comparative figures across other continents, such as the Americas, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East and North Africa, consistently reveal a gender imbalance in political participation. The disparity is notably pronounced when examining the upper echelons of legislative bodies. In the upper house/senate, the global average stands at 26.1 Per cent, emphasizing a persistent gender gap that extends beyond the confines of single/lower houses. The specific regional breakdowns further underscore this trend, highlighting the need for a comprehensive understanding of the barriers hindering women's ascension to political leadership roles. Moreover, disparities persist when both houses are considered

collectively, with the global average of 26.5 Per cent indicating a systemic challenge that transcends regional boundaries (Women in Politics: 2023, 2021). The underrepresentation of women in political decision-making processes raises critical questions about the inclusivity and responsiveness of democratic institutions.

This pervasive gender gap necessitates a nuanced examination of the socio-cultural, institutional, and structural impediments that impede women's full and equal participation in politics. As we delve into subsequent chapters, a comprehensive analysis will unravel the multifaceted challenges faced by women in their quest for political representation, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality and political empowerment.

The principle of equal political representation for all demographic groups is a cornerstone of contemporary constitutional democracy. Throughout history, women, constituting nearly half of the global population at 49.58 Per cent, have faced marginalization in the political arena across both advanced and developing nations. Nonetheless, since the mid-19th century, the landscape has witnessed transformative shifts catalyzed by various social movements. The establishment of the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1945 marked a significant milestone, advocating staunchly for women's rights (United Nations, 2014). The momentum continued to build with the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Often hailed as the International Bill of Rights for women, under Article 7, explicitly reaffirms women's entitlement to participate in political and public office.

In the year 2000, the UN member states collectively embraced the Millennium Declaration, outlining eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be accomplished by 2015, one of which prioritized the advancement of gender equality. This commitment was further expanded in January 2016 with the introduction of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notably, Goal 5 within the SDGs is dedicated to "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls", emphasizing the imperative of facilitating "women's full and effective participation and equal

opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life."

Karl (1995) has identified forms of political participation based on The UNDP Human Development Report into four basic forms of participation:

Household Participation

Economic Participation

Social and Cultural Participation

Political Participation

These forms of participation are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation.

Participation occurs across various domains—economic, social, and political—where individuals engage in multiple roles and levels. Economically, they function as producers, consumers, entrepreneurs, or employees. Socially, they contribute as family members, community organizers, or within ethnic groups. Politically, they exercise roles as voters, members of political parties, or potentially as part of pressure groups (Naga women play a very active role as pressure groups). These roles intersect and influence each other, shaping intricate patterns of political participation.

Household Participation: The household often serves as the primary, and sometimes sole, domain of women's participation. Women typically bear the responsibility for caring for children and other household members, along with managing all domestic tasks associated with their caregiving roles. However, despite their central role in maintaining the household's well-being, women may not always have decision-making power within the family structure.

The status of women within the household also impacts their capacity to engage beyond domestic boundaries. Although women may often exert influence over public affairs through male relatives, their subordinate position within the family structure frequently impedes or restricts their direct involvement in external spheres. Therefore, democratization and addressing gender disparities within the home are essential for facilitating broader participation among women. This involves not only enhancing

women's authority within the household but also promoting a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities between men and women. As democracy takes root within the home, a common outcome of women's increased engagement in society is their heightened decision-making authority within the domestic sphere as well.

Economic Participation: Overall, women's economic participation has been on the rise, yet significant disparities persist between men and women in terms of employment opportunities, rights, compensation, and acknowledgment of women's economic contributions (Karl, 1995). Typically, women's unpaid labor is undervalued and not recognized as a significant contribution to the economy. The absence of income or lower earnings further diminishes women's influence in household decision-making and their capacity to engage in social and political spheres. The economic inequalities experienced by women also have detrimental effects on their self-esteem and societal status.

Social and Cultural Participation: Women actively engage in societal life through various avenues such as community associations, religious groups, and diverse organizations, often constituting the majority of members (a trend prevalent in Naga society as well). Numerous factors influence women's social participation, including their household and economic standing, as well as traditional customs and attitudes, which can either facilitate or hinder their involvement. In societies with conservative perspectives on women's roles outside the home or where significant discrimination persists, women's social engagement may be restricted. However, in many cultures, women play vital roles in preserving and enriching community culture through activities like song, dance, storytelling, art, and ritual, thereby contributing significantly to the cultural fabric.

Political Participation: Women engage in political participation through various means, encompassing not only voting and holding public offices but also collective action within associations and organizations. While significant progress has been made globally in granting women the right to vote and to stand for political office, women

still lag behind men in terms of representation in parliamentary and other leadership positions, both nationally and internationally.

A pivotal realm of women's political engagement lies within community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at local, national, and international levels. This form of political participation is equally crucial as governmental participation. As Arvonne Fraser, former director of the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW), emphasizes: "non-governmental organizations are the conscience of the body politic, whether they are providing social welfare services or advocating for changes in public policies. Civil societies cannot exist long without them because NGOs are a check on the power of governments. Every government needs to be held accountable by its citizens, and citizens acting together in non- governmental associations are far more powerful than individuals acting separately. NGOs also have the freedom to generate, test out and promote the adoption of new ideas, policies, and programs".

Whilst women have a long history of participation in such organizations, their involvement has increased greatly over the past two decades and they have achieved notable successes in influencing the political agenda through such organizations and through movements for social change. Women's participation in development agencies, projects and programmes has had an impact on development policies.

The differences in women's political participation can be attributed not only to socialization processes but also to situational factors (Agarwal, 1987). Women face greater disadvantages in accessing resources that facilitate active political engagement. The role of financial resources must also be emphasized in comprehending these variations. Traditional gender roles in household labor place women at a disadvantage, impeding their ability to attain equal economic status with men and hindering their engagement in political activities through voluntary organizations, which are instrumental in promoting political participation (Ahuja, 1975).

Moreover, individual interest in politics significantly influences political participation. Political interest serves as a crucial determinant of gender disparities in political engagement (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2010a). Iwao (1993) contends that women not only

lack interest in politics but are actively repelled by it. Others suggest that women feel disconnected from the political sphere (LeBlanc, 2023).

Political participation encompasses activities through which individuals express their needs and desires, thereby influencing public decision-making (Brady et al., 1995). Verba and Nie (1972), in a seminal study on political participation, defined it as "activities undertaken by private citizens aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or their actions." Additionally, political participation has been conceptualized as actions directed toward shaping the distribution of social goods and values (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1996). Given its role in regulating public influence over political affairs, political participation is integral to maintaining democracy, whether characterized by low or high levels of engagement (Vowles, 2013).

In a democratic context, political participation serves as the primary mechanism through which consent is either granted or withdrawn, holding rulers accountable to the governed (Goyal, 2015). It encompasses citizens' capacity to engage with governing bodies through various means such as voting, running for office, campaigning, holding political positions, and lobbying either individually or collectively (Vissandjee et al., 2005). Huntington and Nelson (1976) define political participation as "actions by private citizens aimed at influencing governmental decision-making," while Norman D. Palmer characterizes it as citizens' involvement in political activities that directly or indirectly shape the behavior and decisions of policymakers.

Political participation plays a critical role in any political system, contributing to stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority through the involvement of a broad spectrum of the population. Societies where large segments of the population are excluded from participation are often prone to volatility. Hence, even in modern non-democratic political frameworks, the concept of political participation is underscored. In democratic systems, the significance of participation is magnified as it aligns with core principles such as consent, accountability, and political opposition. The expansion of participation aims to instill these principles with substance and vigor. In a democracy, participation serves as the mechanism through which individuals express consent or dissent, while also holding governing bodies accountable to the

governed. For individuals to enjoy equality and freedom, they must have a say in shaping their collective destiny. Participation thus emerges as a fundamental right within the democratic process, exercised by people for a myriad of reasons (Halder & Campbell-Phillips, 2020). While democracy envisions the participation of all, the reality remains that not everyone engages in it, influenced by diverse factors such as a lack of interest in politics or external hindrances impeding their involvement. Despite the democratic ideal of inclusive participation, individuals may abstain due to various reasons, ranging from apathy towards political affairs to external obstacles constraining their active engagement. This discrepancy underscores the nuanced nature of political participation, acknowledging that despite democratic aspirations, universal involvement remains an ongoing challenge.

The level of political engagement among citizens is significantly impacted by their degree of interest in political affairs. This interest encompasses a degree of attention, curiosity, and engagement individuals direct toward political issues, actors, and institutions. A keen interest in politics serves as a catalyst, propelling individuals to seek political information, shape political opinions, participate in political organizations, and involve themselves in diverse forms of political action, including voting, protesting, campaigning, or reaching out to representatives. Consequently, the significance of interest in politics cannot be understated, as it plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality and dynamism of democracy by cultivating an informed, active, and responsive citizenry.

Interest in political affairs serves as a crucial prerequisite for active political involvement. Numerous research studies have consistently observed a notable discrepancy in political interest between men and women, a phenomenon evident across both developed and developing nations (Verba et al., 1997; Burns et al., 2001; Chhibber, 2002). This trend extends to young women as well, as indicated by the works of Sampat and Mishra (2014) and Mishra and Gupta (2019). Political engagement serves as a primary indicator of electoral involvement. A heightened interest in political matters corresponds positively with voting likelihood. This motivational aspect, as elucidated by (Luskin 1990; Prior 2010), functions as a driving force for political participation. Whether eliciting citizen attention or curiosity, instilling confidence in

one's capacity to impact the political system (Smets and Ham, 2013), or emanating from a personal affinity for politics (Blais and Daoust, 2020), political interest emerges as a multifaceted catalyst for civic engagement.

The disparities in political interest levels are often attributed to the socialization of women. The ramifications of a lower political interest among women are significant, potentially placing them in a disadvantaged position, given that heightened political interest is typically associated with increased political engagement and enhanced decision-making capabilities.

According to Rai (2011), the degree of women's engagement in election campaigns is significantly influenced by a keen interest in political affairs. With that in mind a question on interest in politics which not only look at the level of interest in politics among women but men as well to understand if there are any existing gender differences.

4.2 Results and discussions

The study, conducted across four districts of Nagaland, namely Mokokchung, Mon, Longleng and Kiphire with a total sample size of 402, employed stratified random sampling to select participants from the electorate population. Figure 4.1 illustrates the levels of interest in politics observed in the study.

The figure 4.1 offers insights into the varying levels of interest in Nagaland politics among both genders, categorized as Interested, to some extent, and Not Interested. A noticeable contrast emerges between men's and women's political engagement. While 51.46 Per cent of men express a strong interest in politics, only 27.04 Per cent of women share the same enthusiasm. Conversely, women exhibit a slightly higher level of moderate interest (35.71 Per cent) compared to men (27.18 Per cent). However, a significant proportion of women (37.24 Per cent) express no interest in politics, contrasting with 21.36 Per cent of men. This data highlights gender disparities in political engagement, with men generally showing greater interest. The trend also indicates a gradual decrease in women's interest from some level to no interest, while for men, the trend reverses, declining from some interest to no interest. These findings

emphasize the importance of addressing barriers to female political participation and promoting inclusivity in political processes.

Figure 4.1: Interest in Politics

INTEREST IN POLITICS

51.46

35.71   37.24

27.04   27.18

21.36

Interested   To some extend   Not interested

— —Male — —Female
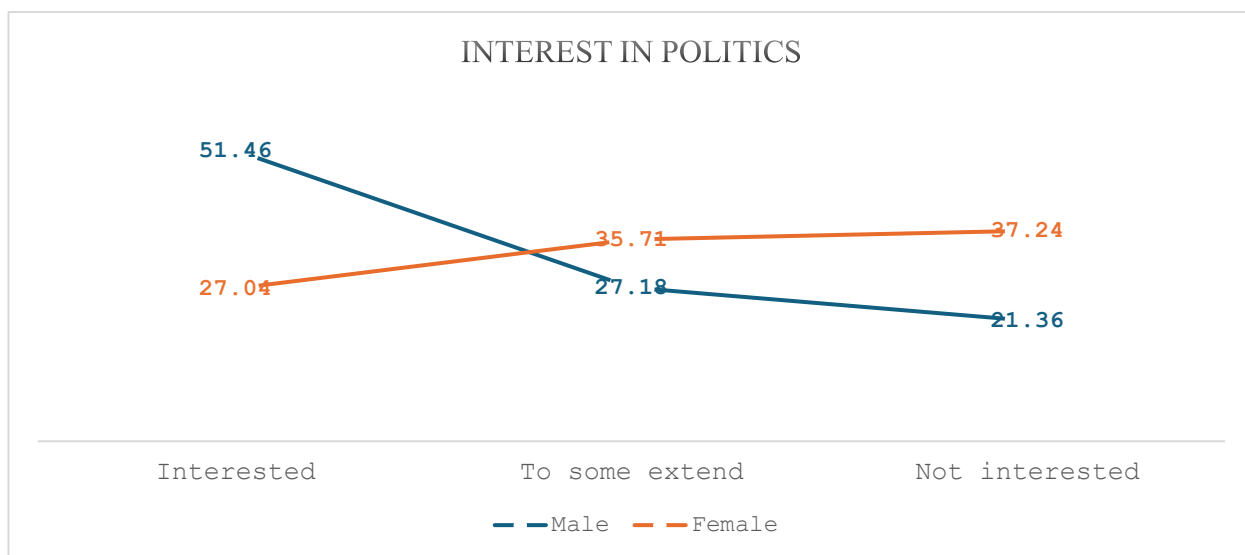
Source: Survey report

Fig 4.2 presents interest in politics among individuals with varying levels of education, categorized into three groups: Interested, To some extent, and No Interest. Upon analysis, notable trends emerge regarding the relationship between education levels and political engagement. Among illiterate individuals, the majority express no interest in politics, with 54.55 per cent, while smaller Per centages indicate some level of interest. However, as education levels increase, the pattern shifts. Those with education up to the primary level also show a significant proportion with no interest in politics, though lower than the illiterate group, while those expressing some interest increase. Interestingly, individuals with education up to matriculation display the highest Per centage expressing interest in politics at 40.82 per cent, followed by those with education up to 12th pass at 23.08 per cent. Conversely, the proportion expressing no interest decreases progressively with higher education levels. The trend shifts again among individuals with graduate and above education, with a relatively balanced distribution between those expressing interest, some interest, and no interest in politics. Overall, the data suggests a complex relationship between education levels and political

engagement, with higher education levels generally associated with increased interest in politics and a decrease in the proportion expressing no interest. These findings stress the importance of education in shaping individuals' political awareness and engagement, highlighting the potential for educational initiatives to promote greater civic participation among all segments of society.

Fig: 4.2: Education with interest in politics

Education with interest in politics
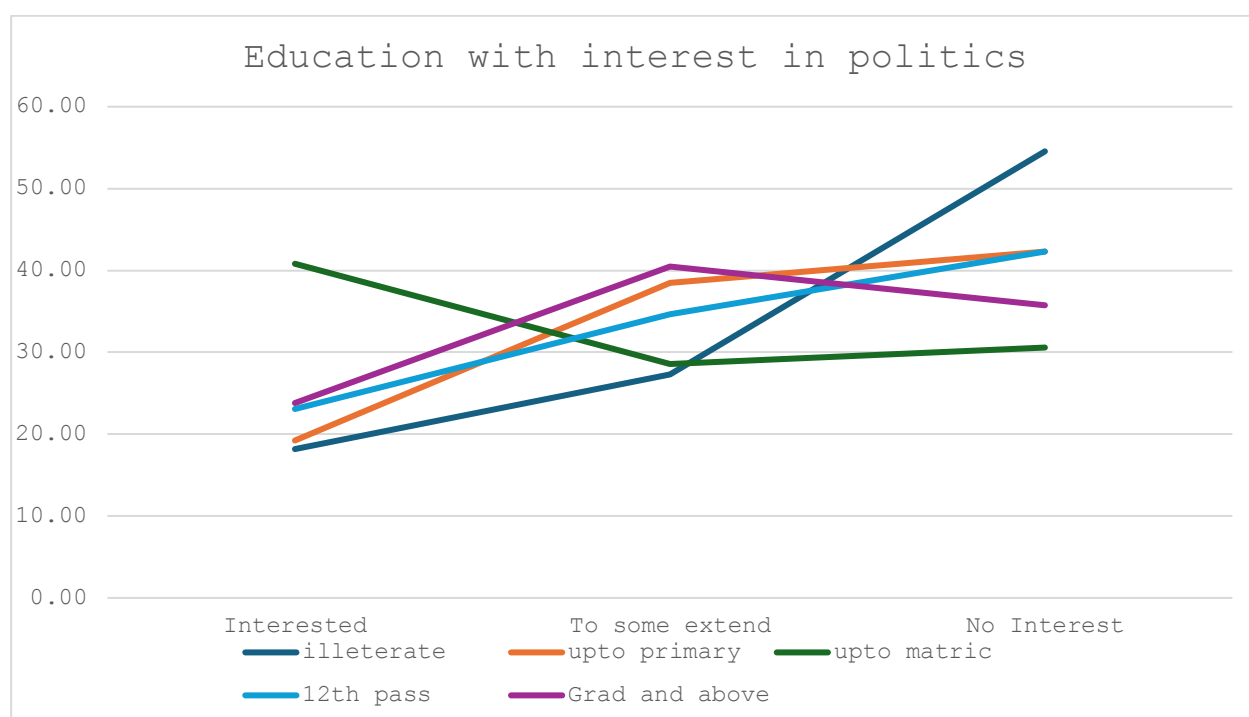
Source: Survey report

Table 4.1 of binary logistic regression analysis investigates the factors influencing women's participation in casting votes, with a focus on their political engagement. The results reveal that age and occupation significantly impact women's likelihood of casting votes. Specifically, women aged 36-60 and those aged 60 and above are significantly more likely to vote compared to younger women aged 18-35. Additionally, women employed in sectors other than agriculture, such as service, self-employment, or unemployment, are more likely to cast votes. However, factors such as tribe, education level, residence, party affiliation, awareness, family political decision-making, perception of equal opportunities in politics, level of participation, influence of customary laws, freedom of expression in electoral decision-making, perception of

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local decision-making body influence, and the presence of women in village/town councils do not significantly influence women's voting behavior. These findings suggest that while age and occupation play pivotal roles in determining women's political participation through casting votes, other demographic, cultural, and social factors examined do not show significant associations. During the field survey, it was observed that older women, particularly those aged 36-60 and 60+, are significantly more likely to cast votes compared to younger women aged 18-35. older women often had more exposure to political events and discussions over time, contributing to their increased interest and participation in politics. Additionally, older women may have developed stronger civic identities and a sense of responsibility toward exercising their voting rights, leading to higher political engagement. During the survey, it was also revealed that societal norms and cultural expectations in Nagaland increasingly emphasize the importance of women's voices in political decision-making processes. As a result, women may feel a greater societal pressure or sense of duty to participate in politics compared to men, leading to a higher likelihood of political engagement among women. While conducting the field survey, it became apparent that geographical location alone did not significantly impact women's political participation. Instead, individual characteristics and societal influences played more substantial roles in determining political engagement levels among women across different regions.

Within the sphere of cultural factors, insights gleaned from the field survey underscored the impact of perceptions regarding customary laws and societal views on women's political participation in Nagaland. In communities where customary laws were viewed positively for advancing gender equality and promoting women's involvement in decision-making processes, there was often a corresponding increase in women's political engagement. Conversely, in regions where negative perceptions of customary laws prevailed, hindering women's decision-making roles due to entrenched patriarchal norms, women's political participation tended to be lower. Moreover, the survey revealed a shifting societal perspective towards recognizing and valuing women's contributions in political spheres, albeit traditional attitudes regarding women's societal roles still persisted to some extent. This evolving societal outlook likely played a role in encouraging higher levels of political engagement among women in Nagaland,

reflecting a gradual departure from conventional gender norms and an increasing acknowledgment of women's agency in political arenas. The field survey suggested that higher levels of political awareness were often associated with urban areas or individuals with access to formal education and media channels. However, despite their increased awareness, some individuals expressed feelings of disillusionment with the political system or perceived their impact on political outcomes to be limited, potentially leading to decreased political participation among highly informed individuals. Insights from the field survey indicated that beliefs in the influence of local decision-making bodies on electoral politics varied across communities. In areas where community-level governance structures were robust and inclusive, women were more likely to actively participate in political processes, reflecting the influence of localized political dynamics on women's engagement. The field survey highlighted the importance of community-level support and inclusion in promoting women's political participation. Communities that embraced gender-inclusive practices and actively encouraged women's involvement in political activities exhibited higher levels of women's political engagement compared to those with more restrictive social norms and gender roles. Field survey findings underscored the positive correlation between opportunities for women to participate in decision-making discussions and their overall political engagement. Communities that valued women's voices and provided platforms for meaningful participation in political discourse experienced higher levels of women's political involvement, highlighting the critical role of empowerment in driving women's political participation.

Table 4.1: Binary Logistic regression, Casting vote with reference to Women's political participation.

Category	Independent Variables	B(SE)	P-value	Odds Ratio
Demographic profile	Age	2.201(0.84)	0.009	9.038
	Tribe affiliation	-0.055(1.247)	0.965	0.946

	Occupation	-0.999(0.361)	0.006	0.368
	Education level	-0.06(0.278)	0.829	0.942
	Residence	0.635(0.696)	0.362	1.887
Social Factors	Party affiliation	-0.045(0.947)	0.962	0.956
	Awareness	-0.115(0.464)	0.804	0.891
	family Political Decision	-0.153(0.459)	0.738	0.858
	Equal opportunity in politics	0.048(0.649)	0.942	1.049
	Participation	0.826(1.049)	0.431	2.283
Cultural Factors	Influence of customary laws on Naga women in decision-making?	-0.483(0.32)	0.131	0.617
	Freedom of expression in electoral decision-making	-0.382(0.638)	0.549	0.683
	Women in village/town council?	-0.475(0.537)	0.377	0.622
	local decision-making body have influence in electoral politics?	-1.249(1.312)	0.341	0.287

Table 4.2 The binary logistic regression analysis provides insights into various factors influencing women's likelihood of contesting elections in Nagaland. The results indicate that demographic factors such as age, tribe, occupation, education level, and residence do not significantly predict women's participation in contesting elections. Similarly, cultural factors such as party affiliation, awareness level, perceived equal opportunity in politics, and influence of customary laws also do not have a significant impact on women's likelihood of contesting elections. However, certain social factors seem to play a more substantial role. For instance, women's representation in village/town councils emerges as a significant predictor, suggesting that local leadership roles may positively influence women's political aspirations. Additionally, while family political decisions and current levels of political participation show borderline significance, indicating potential influence, overall, social factors do not strongly predict women's likelihood of contesting elections. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of societal attitudes and opportunities for women's political engagement in influencing their participation in contesting elections, highlighting avenues for promoting gender-inclusive political processes in Nagaland.

The analysis revealed that age, gender, and residence did not exhibit significant associations with women's likelihood of contesting elections. This implies that these demographic factors might not be decisive determinants in influencing women's decisions to enter the political arena. This finding aligns with observations from the field survey, where age, gender, and residence did not emerge as dominant factors shaping women's political aspirations. Despite cultural and societal expectations surrounding gender roles, the logistic regression model did not find a significant relationship between gender and women's participation in contesting elections. This suggests that women's interest in political engagement may not be heavily influenced solely by their gender identity. Similarly, geographical location alone may not play a decisive role in shaping women's political aspirations, as indicated by the lack of a significant correlation between residence and the likelihood of women contesting elections.

The results from the binary logistic regression analysis indicate that certain social factors wield considerable influence over the propensity of women to participate as

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candidates in elections within Nagaland. Specifically, women's representation in village/town councils emerges as a significant predictor, suggesting that local leadership opportunities can serve as catalysts for women's increased engagement in political processes and aspirations for higher political positions. This finding underscores the importance of creating avenues for women to participate in local governance, as it may encourage them to take on more active roles in broader political arenas. Additionally, while family political decisions and current levels of political participation exhibit borderline significance, hinting at a potential influence, the overall impact of social factors on women's likelihood of contesting elections is not particularly strong. This suggests that while these factors may have some degree of influence, they do not exert a dominant effect on women's decisions to enter electoral politics.

Based on the insights gleaned from the field survey, these findings suggest that while individual and social factors, such as local leadership opportunities, can positively shape women's political aspirations, demographic and cultural factors alone may not significantly impact women's decisions to contest elections. Instead, a combination of various factors, including social dynamics and opportunities for political representation, may collectively contribute to shaping women's engagement in electoral processes in Nagaland. Therefore, efforts to promote women's political participation should focus on creating inclusive environments, providing leadership opportunities at the local level, and addressing barriers to women's political representation.

Table 4.2: Binary Logistic regression, Contesting election with reference to Women's political participation.

Category	Independent Variables	B(SE)	P-value	Odds Ratio
Demographic profile	Age	-0.343(0.33)	0.298	0.71
	Tribe affiliation	-0.061(0.608)	0.92	0.941
	Occupation	0.068(0.181)	0.706	1.071
	Education level	0.015(0.147)	0.918	1.015
	Residence	-0.214(0.379)	0.572	0.807
Social Factors	Party affiliation	0.537(0.578)	0.353	1.711
	Awareness	-0.145(0.300)	0.629	0.865
	family Political Decision	-0.455(0.257)	0.077	0.634
	Equal opportunity in politics	-0.394(0.422)	0.35	0.674
	Participation	0.849(0.521)	0.103	2.338
Cultural factors	Influence of customary laws on Naga women in decision-making	-0.288(0.204)	0.159	0.75

	Freedom of expression in electoral decision-making	0.127(0.434)	0.77	1.135
	Women in village/town council?	0.844(0.356)	0.018	2.326

Table 4.3 presents the results of a binary logistic regression analysis examining the factors associated with women's political participation. Each row represents a different independent variable, categorized into demographic, cultural, and social factors, along with their respective coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), p-values, and odds ratios.

In terms of demographic factors, age shows a statistically significant association with women's political participation. Tribe, employment status, education level, and residence do not show statistically significant associations with women's political participation, as indicated by their p-values being greater than 0.05.

Moving to social factors, awareness exhibits a significant positive association with participation. Specifically, as awareness increases from being less aware to moderately aware and highly aware, the odds of participation increase by a factor of 3.172. Family political decision-making, as well as the perception of equal opportunities in politics, do not appear to significantly affect women's political participation, as indicated by their non-significant p-values.

Regarding Cultural factors, the influence of customary laws on Naga women in decision-making does not show a statistically significant association with political participation. Likewise, freedom of expression in electoral decision-making and the presence of women in village/town councils also do not significantly influence participation. Interestingly, the influence of local decision-making bodies in electoral politics shows a significant association with women's political participation with a coefficient of -1.16 and a p- value of 0.033. This indicates that the perception of local decision-making bodies influence electoral politics has a significant effect on women's political participation. Those who perceive a greater influence from local decision-making bodies are less likely to participate in political activities. Overall, this analysis highlights the importance of factors such as age, awareness, and the influence of local

decision-making bodies are important factors influencing women's political participation in the context of the Naga community.

The findings from the field survey present compelling insights into the dynamics of women's political participation within the Naga community. Firstly, the observation that younger generations exhibit a greater inclination towards social and political activism signifies a promising shift in attitudes towards governance and societal change. This generational enthusiasm holds immense potential for driving political reform and fostering inclusivity in decision-making processes, highlighting the importance of nurturing youth engagement initiatives. Moreover, the strong correlation between awareness of political issues and increased political participation underscores the critical role of education and awareness-raising initiatives. By empowering individuals, particularly women, with knowledge about their rights, political processes, and avenues for engagement, these efforts can serve as catalysts for active citizenship and community involvement. However, the survey also sheds light on the challenges posed by the influence of local decision-making bodies, which detrimentally affect women's political participation. Patriarchal structures, entrenched power dynamics, and cultural norms within these institutions create barriers to gender equality and inclusion, hindering women's access to decision-making roles. Overcoming these obstacles demands a comprehensive approach encompassing advocacy for gender-responsive policies, capacity-building for women leaders, and efforts to challenge traditional gender roles.

In conclusion, the insights gleaned from the field survey offer a roadmap for advancing more inclusive and democratic governance within the Naga community. By addressing the determinants and challenges identified, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions and policy strategies to enhance women's representation and participation in decision-making processes, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and participatory society.

Table 4.3: Binary Logistic Regression, participation with reference to women's political participation.

Category	Independent Variables	B(SE)	P-value	Odds Ratio
Demographic profile	Age	-0.94(0.41)	0.021	2.56
	Tribe affiliation	-.72(0.66)	0.276	0.487
	Employment	.36(0.22)	0.109	1.428
	Education level	-.09(0.19)	0.65	0.918
	Residence	-.17(0.45)	0.709	0.843
Social Factors	Awareness	1.15(0.40)	0.004	3.172
	Family Political Decision	.16(0.31)	0.607	1.174
	Equal opportunity in politics	.34(0.52)	0.504	1.411
Cultural Factors	Influence of customary laws on Naga women in decision-making?	-.25(0.24)	0.291	0.78
	Freedom of expression in electoral decision-making	-.52(0.55)	0.348	0.595
	Women in village/town council?	.15(0.42)	0.717	1.163
	Do local decision-making body have influence in electoral politics?	-1.16(0.54)	0.033	0.314

Apart from the closed ended questions the respondence were asked an open-ended question (see annexure I) to better understand the challenges faced by Naga women in politics. From the collected data these were the factors that majority of the respondence say were affecting women's involvement in politics in Naga society.

- **Customary Laws and Traditions**: Traditional and Customary practices often exclude women from decision-making processes, leading to their underrepresentation in political spheres.

- **Gender Stereotyping**: Women encounter stereotypes that undermine their ability to lead, perpetuating the notion that political spaces are primarily reserved for men. This idea of women being the caretaker of the family and men taking care of the society is a big part of the Naga customary practices and traditions leading to gender stereotyping.

- **Lack of Support and Opportunities**: Another frequent response received from the respondence was that women face a dearth of support and opportunities, compounded by historical marginalization and economic disparities. Interestingly many women responded that it was women themselves who doesn't support women when a woman tries to come forward and participate in politics.

- **Inferiority Complex**: Societal norms and limited educational opportunities in the past contribute to women's internalized feelings of inferiority, hindering their confidence to engage in politics. The feeling of inferiority by women due to lack of education was mostly stated from the districts of Mon and Longleng. Though education may not have a direct impact on voting and participation it is one factor leading to women not coming forward.

- **Patriarchal Mindsets and cultural barriers**: Like many societies the Naga society's patriarchal nature reinforces male dominance in politics, creating significant barriers for women's participation and leadership. Traditional gender roles restrict women's involvement in politics, relegating them to caregiving roles rather than leadership positions.

- **Limited Representation:** Women are often marginalized in political decision-making, with customary laws barring them from holding leadership roles in the

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traditional decision-making bodies which in the context of the Naga's have a very big influence over its people.

- **Lack of Platform and Support:** Women lack the necessary platforms and support systems to showcase their leadership abilities and navigate male-dominated political environments. Due to their exclusion in the decision-making bodies at the local level women don't often get the platform and support to grow.

Naga women in politics face deeply ingrained gender biases, systemic inequalities, and cultural norms that hinder their full participation. Addressing these challenges requires efforts to challenge stereotypes, reform customary laws, and create a more inclusive political environment.

Casting Vote: Age: Older women aged 36-60 and 60+ are more likely to vote compared to younger women aged 18-35

Occupation: Women employed in sectors other than agriculture show a higher likelihoods of casting votes.

Contesting Elections
Demographics: Factors like age, tribe, occupation, education level, and residence do not significantly predict women's participation in contesting elections.
Social Factors: Family political decisions and current political participation exhibit borderline significance.
Local Leadership: Women's representation in village/town councils significantly predicts political aspirations.

Political Participation: Age significantly influences women's political participation, with older women showing higher engagement.
Awareness: Awareness of political issues positively correlates with increased political participation among women.
Local Leadership: Women's representation in local leadership roles significantly predicts political aspirations.

OVERALL FINDINGS

Conclusion

The study examining women's political participation in Nagaland through binary logistic regression analysis offers valuable insights into the multifaceted factors influencing women's engagement in electoral processes. Across three tables analyzing demographic, social, and cultural factors, several significant findings emerge.

Firstly, demographic factors such as age demonstrate a significant association with women's political participation, with older women showing higher likelihoods of engagement. However, other demographic variables like tribes, occupation, education level, and residence do not significantly predict women's participation in casting votes or contesting elections.

Social factors play a nuanced role, with awareness of political issues exhibiting a significant positive association with participation. Yet, family political decisions and perceptions of equal opportunities in politics do not exert significant influence. Notably, women's representation in local leadership roles emerges as a key predictor of their political aspirations, emphasizing the importance of promoting local governance opportunities for women.

Cultural factors present mixed findings, with the influence of customary laws and the presence of women in village/town councils showing no significant associations with political participation. However, the perception of local decision-making bodies' influence on electoral politics significantly impacts women's engagement, highlighting the challenges posed by entrenched patriarchal structures within these institutions. Overall, the study underscores the complex interplay of individual, social, and cultural dynamics shaping women's political participation in Nagaland. While age, awareness, and local leadership opportunities emerge as significant determinants, barriers such as patriarchal norms and limited perceptions of political influence persist. The findings suggest a need for targeted interventions aimed at promoting youth engagement, enhancing political awareness, and challenging traditional gender roles to foster more inclusive and democratic governance within the Naga community.

In conclusion, addressing the key determinants identified in this study and implementing comprehensive strategies to empower women and challenge systemic barriers are crucial steps toward promoting greater women's representation and active involvement in decision-making processes in Nagaland. The findings of this study underscore the significance of several factors influencing women's political participation.

Firstly, the study found that political awareness plays a crucial role in encouraging women's engagement in politics. This evidence supports the need for educational initiatives focused on enhancing political literacy among women, especially in rural areas. By equipping women with the necessary knowledge and skills for meaningful political engagement, these initiatives can help address the knowledge gap that hampers participation. Community based awareness programs and civic education campaigns, as highlighted by the study's findings, can be effective tools in bridging this gap and promoting informed political action.

Moreover, the study revealed that local leadership opportunities are a significant predictor of women's political aspirations. This finding emphasizes the necessity of creating enabling environments that promote women's leadership at all levels of governance. Supporting women's participation through mentorship programs, leadership training, and networking opportunities would be vital to empowering women to overcome structural and cultural barriers, enabling them to pursue political roles with greater confidence.

The study also identified that patriarchal structures and entrenched cultural norms continue to act as significant barriers to women's political participation, particularly within local governance institutions. This highlights the importance of advocating gender responsive policies, quotas, and affirmative action measures. These measures would serve to ensure equitable representation of women in political institutions and address the systemic biases that hinder women's full participation. Furthermore, the study's findings on the limited influence of women in local councils and the challenges posed by decision making bodies that are often shaped by patriarchal norms call for inclusive dialogue and collaboration among government agencies, civil society

organizations, and community leaders. This collaboration would be key to challenging these norms and creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women's political engagement.

In conclusion, by grounding the recommendations in the study's findings, it becomes evident that promoting women's political participation in Nagaland requires a holistic approach. This approach must focus on increasing political awareness, enhancing leadership opportunities, and addressing cultural and institutional barriers through targeted policy interventions. Through these proactive measures, stakeholders can pave the way for women to actively contribute to governance processes, thereby advancing towards a more equitable and participatory society in Nagaland.

Chapter 5

Naga Customary Laws and Traditions and Women's Political Participation

5.1 Introduction

Bruce L. Benson (2019) in Encyclopedia of Law and Economics defines "Customary law, a system of rules of obligation and governance processes that spontaneously evolve from the bottom up within a community, guides behavior in primitive, medieval, Custom of Merchants and contemporary tribal societies, as well as merchant communities during the high Middle Ages, modern international trade, and many other historical and current settings".

Throughout significant portions of Northeast India, customary law holds immense significance. In the annals of history, customary law has been transmitted orally within specific ethnic communities, devoid of codification. When conflicts emerged, necessitating resolution, individuals asserting authority often elderly men would articulate the principles or rules they believed were applicable to the situation at hand (De Maaker, 2023). It encompasses rules and regulations related to property, family relations, and land rights, particularly for ethnic communities categorized as tribes. From a legal standpoint, it is assumed that individuals belonging to a single tribe share a common language, religion, and culture. Customary law applies to all members within such a group, even though it may not be relevant to those outside the group. In regions of Northeast India where it holds legal status, customary law supersedes other civil and common laws in specific domains of life. Such is the case in the state of Nagaland where 86.48 Per cent of the population are tribal (Forest Survey of India, 2019). Article 371A states that 'no Act of Parliament in respect to Naga customary law and procedure shall apply (…) unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by resolution so decides'. Such an Act gives Nagaland state a special status and freedom when it comes to their customary law practices.

5.2 The Naga Society and its Customary Laws

The Nagas are a group of tribes living in the states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh in northeastern India and the northwestern region of Myanmar. The Nagas in Nagaland comprise more than 20 tribes with diverse origins, cultures, and appearances. The many Naga languages, which are sometimes considered dialects, are part of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family. Each village often has its own dialect, and different Naga groups communicate using broken Assamese (Nagamese) or sometimes English and Hindi (Britannica, 2023).

Naga customary laws are traditional laws that govern the Naga tribes. These laws have never been codified for uniform application, which can only be done by the government of the day by constitutional and valid legislative methods, to be applied and enforced by Customary Courts properly established by the government for the purpose. Naga customary laws vary among tribes and villages and cover various issues, including land ownership, marriage, inheritance, and dispute resolution. Though the practice of customary laws differs from tribe to tribe and village to village, the one common nature of the Naga customary laws is its patriarchal nature, where traditionally, the decision-making powers are almost absolute in the hands of men, irrespective of different tribes in villages. However, the structure of the decision-making bodies may differ.

The advancement of women in India, as in other nations, must be linked to the advancement of the nation. However, this is challenging given the non-uniform nature of women's issues. Variations exist based on factors such as rural vs. urban residence, occupational and gender roles, and caste, class, and community distinctions (Kasturi, 1996). Additionally, multiple distinct personal law systems are present for different religious groups, in addition to the varied customary laws that remain to be observed by minor ethnic or regional groups or tribes.

Family structures, kinship dynamics, socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and social customs exhibit notable variations across regions within the country, often aligning with class and caste distinctions. These distinctions delineate members of different classes or castes from one another, shaping their roles and identities within society. In the tribal Naga society, such patterns are particularly evident in the distinct

roles traditionally assigned to men and women. Traditionally, the Naga society has been characterized by its casteless and classless structure, with women enjoying high social status and a significant degree of independence. But despite the purportedly advantageous conditions for women in tribal societies in comparison to their counterparts in caste-based societies, this supposed positivity remains primarily confined to theoretical or nominal realms. In actuality, women in tribal societies are routinely deprived of their right to equality (Das, 2017). In contrast to their Indian counterparts, Naga women are not subjected to the practice of veiling or other exclusionary systems. However, they remain subject to customary laws, which are considered sacrosanct and are closely linked to issues of identity. Naga women's status in society is a peculiar one, with them enjoying many rights as compared to their counterparts but at the same time are deprived of many rights (Naga Women's Union et al., 2018). As a result, they have played pivotal roles in the family and in some community affairs, which are usually distant from decision-making affairs. Naga society is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal. For example, family names are typically passed through sons, who also inherit family land. This highlights the fact that despite the considerable personal freedom enjoyed by women, men still hold a dominant position in the Naga society.

Although multiple waves of liberal democracy have increased the overall level of democracy and political similarity globally, significant differences in the democratic lifeworld persist among various regions and populations. Democratic institutions, practices, and ideals are intricately interwoven and adjusted to their historically evolved contexts and circumstances, manifesting unique cultural nuances in democracies across the world (Wouters, 2018). The Nagas have implemented a democratic system that reflects their customary and tribal cultural background, utilizing a modification process after India attained independence and the subsequent imposition of democracy.

Socialization can be broadly understood as acquiring the necessary skills and attitudes to carry out social roles effectively. The learning process by which individuals acquire their political opinions, beliefs, and values is commonly referred to as political socialization. It is important to note that political beliefs are not innate but acquired through lifelong learning. The socialization process typically commences within the

family unit and extends to various agents such as schools, peers, mass media, and political leaders and events. Political socialization is an ongoing and continuous process throughout an individual's life.

Culture encompasses entrenched beliefs and customs that delineate a framework for existence, passed down from one generation to another, and are often resistant to rapid alteration. Across all cultures, there is a fundamental emphasis on sex and gender in shaping both the understanding of the world and prescriptive norms. Most cultures are patriarchal to some degree, with men and men's characteristics considered normal. Consequently, in areas of life where men and women typically differ, the standard arrangements are tailored to men's characteristics rather than women. Political culture refers to the subjective perceptions, beliefs, values, foci of identification and loyalty, and political knowledge and expectations that emerge from the historical experiences of different nations and groups. It is a crucial factor in shaping political attitudes and behaviours, and understanding it is vital to comprehending political systems (Brown, 1979).

To gain a deeper insight into Naga political culture, it's essential to grasp the historical and political inheritance of the Nagas. Naga tribes inherit a distinct heritage rooted in an oral tradition, characterized by mythic folklore narrations, a diverse array of material culture, and socio-political systems that vary uniquely among each tribe, and in some instances, each village. Since the start of the 20th century, when the tumultuous history between Nagaland and India began, men have dominated the political sphere of Naga society (Vaiphei, 2017). The rise of the Naga nationalist movement led to the emergence of local consciousness of a distinct social identity as part of a patriarchal discourse after the formation of the 'Naga Club' in 1918. Women were largely absent during this period as per the traditional fabric of Naga society, and issues of social or political importance were the domain of men. Contemporary politics in Nagaland are shaped by a combination of historical legacies, the specific social structures adopted by different tribes, the inherent nature of political responsibilities, the impact of political cultures from neighboring states, and the growing influence of social media platforms. A distinctive method of political socialization that is passed down through generations is infused into Naga political culture as a result of this mixing (Yanthan, 2023).

According to Temsula Ao "The allegiance that Naga has towards their village and, by that token, to their community, is reflexive in the way elections are carried out" (Cited in Yanthan, 2023). This accurately describes Naga political consciousness as it has been defined and sustained. Moreover, men and men's traits are seen as normal in patriarchal ideologies. Women are perceived as inferior to men in any way that they differ from them. As a result, in areas of life where men and women typically differ, the norms are designed to fit men's traits rather than those of women.

Fig 5.1 **Customary laws and gender**
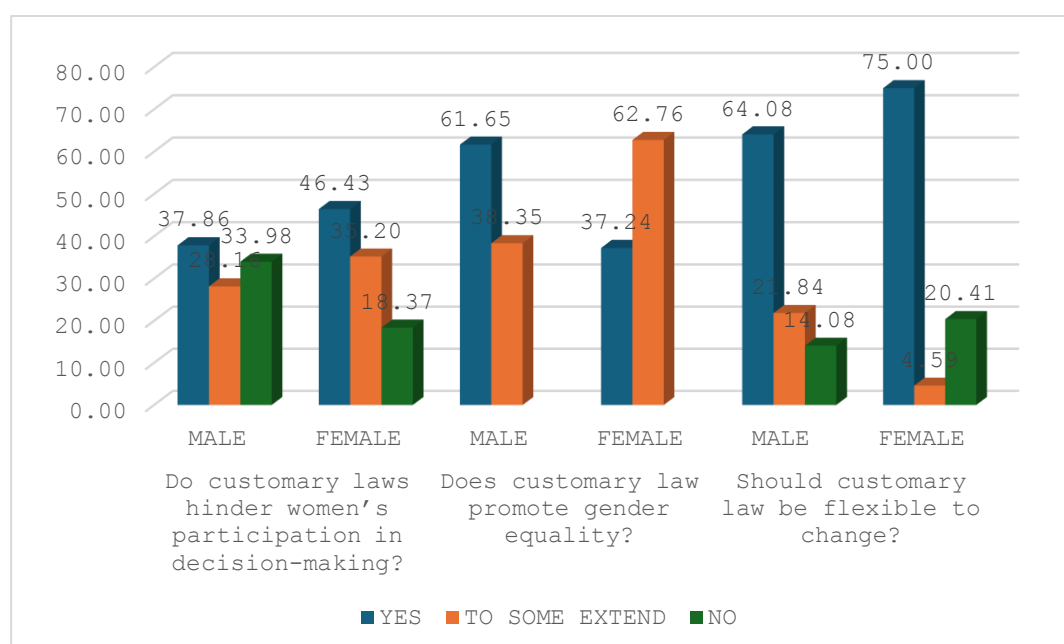
Source: *survey report*

When surveyed about the influence of customary laws on women's engagement in decision-making, it was found that 66.1 per cent of men and 81.6 per cent of women acknowledged the influence exerted by these laws to varying extents. This suggests that nearly three-quarters (73.85 per cent) of the population believes that customary laws hinder women's decision-making abilities.

In response to a follow-up question about whether customary laws promote gender equality, two-thirds of men responded affirmatively, while two-thirds of women

responded negatively. When asked whether customary laws should be flexible enough to adapt to changes, 64.1 per cent of men and 75 per cent of women agreed.

These results indicate that customary laws have a significant impact on decision-making and gender equality. Despite widespread agreement among both men and women that these laws should be adaptable to change, this does not appear to be happening in practice.

5.3 Status of Women in Naga Society

While women within the Naga society do experience a spectrum of entitlements and privileges, it remains evident that women continue to grapple with a multitude of societal challenges and issues. One of the biggest obstacles is the cultural and societal norms that limit the involvement of women in politics and hold them in lower regard than men. Additionally, women face institutional barriers, such as discriminatory laws and policies, alongside a dearth of resources and assistance, impeding their ability to pursue political candidacy effectively. The tribal population of the northeastern region exhibits discernible instances of gender-based deprivation of rights for women within the domains of inheritance and decision-making, both of which are influenced by customary laws and practices (Das, 2017). This deprivation of women in the decision-making sphere within the state can be seen in almost all social settings in the Naga society transcending tribal lines. The status of women is intricately tied to the distribution of land and labor within both familial and societal domains. Across a multitude of tribes, the allocation of resources and exercise of political power lies solely within the hands of the male-dominated (usually only male) village council. Meanwhile, women primarily maintain control over the family economy and household chores. Although this division of labor is comparatively more balanced than that of caste-based societies, it is essential to note that gender equality remains elusive within tribal contexts.

The exclusion of women from participation in the traditional decision-making structures of the Naga society has notable implications for the democratic electoral process within the state. This interconnection is attributable to the fact that the electoral outcomes and the success of a candidate are substantially influenced by the local

decision-making bodies (Like the Village councils, Gaon Buras (GB's), and the Chieftain). Although democratic institutions, elections, and electioneering processes are a reflection of modernity and rationalization, in Nagaland, political leaders are elected often based on traditional practices, principles, and values (Wouters, 2014, cited in Kuotsu & Walling, 2018). The village, therefore, becomes the center of these traditional practices, principles, and values where usually elections in Nagaland are fought. In the state, elections are held in the local communities. It is based on village politics, where a political party needs a lot of intricate strategies that are customized at the local level in addition to its manifesto (Wouters, 2017). In a normative political context in a Naga society, a hierarchical power structure often prevailed, in which the perspectives of the older generations held more significant weight than those of the younger members within a village. Similarly, the affluent members of society were granted more influential voices in the decision-making process compared to the economically disadvantaged. Additionally, the physically strong members of the community were accorded more leverage in the political discourse in contrast to the weaker individuals. Furthermore, there existed a gender bias in the political sphere, where the opinions of men were prioritized over those of women.

5.4 Naga Women in Politics

Till the recently conducted 14th Assembly election, Nagaland had no female member in the state legislature. It is only in this term when the state is approaching its 60th statehood anniversary, that only two women members are elected in the state legislative election for the first time. This highlights the status of women in Naga politics, in relation to the highest governing body in the state has not had equal representation of women. Despite the claim that Naga society supports and fights for granting women equal chances in the political realm, the societal thinking surrounding women's roles is still conventional (Naga Women's Union et al., 2018). It also reflects the gender inequality present in Naga society. In a state with such a political scenario, the role played by the village communities in electoral politics becomes an integral position in emerging victorious in an election. Jelle JP Wouters presents the four models of how Nagas elects their leaders, namely, the *Angh* model, the village consensus candidate model, the clan candidate model, and the household model (Wouters, 2014).

Throughout these models, the traditional male-dominated village council consistently emerged as a pivotal player in the leadership election processes. The Concerning voting patterns, Nagaland's constituencies become more divided into small blocks due to the fact that, within the Naga community, the individual's vote is often determined not solely by personal autonomy but rather by the collective decision-making of their household, clan, or village. Traditional decision-making bodies play a vital role in governing society at the local level, especially in a state where the rural population makes up 71.14 Per cent of the total population (census, 2011). The highest governing body in a village is the Village council, which is responsible for maintaining law and order and taking care of its people's welfare. However, customs and traditions define men as the natural leaders, and therefore, women are not allowed to be part of the Village council. This exclusion of women is a longstanding custom in Naga society sanctioned by customary laws. Given the predominance of male decision-makers at the local level, coupled with the idiosyncratic voting trends within the society, the attainment of representation and leadership by women remains an arduous endeavor.

During field survey, the author observed residents' perceptions of their respective Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in a specific village or area. A nearly unanimous response among the residents was found when they were asked about their satisfaction with the performance of their local MLA. Notably, villages that showed support for their MLA tended to have a majority of positive responses, while villages that opposed the MLA had a higher proportion of negative responses. According to Wouters and Wijunamai (2019), politicians in Nagaland favor individuals from their social groups, particularly those belonging to the same clan, village, and tribe, when distributing government jobs and state resources. This practice has become ingrained in their political behavior, establishing a longstanding pattern of prioritizing their supporters.

What was particularly noteworthy was that this sentiment of satisfaction persisted despite the lack of essential infrastructure, such as adequate roads and basic infrastructure within these villages. The key factor contributing to this satisfaction seemed to be the pride of having an MLA who belonged to their clan, village, or tribe

representing them in the legislative assembly. Additionally, there was hopeful anticipation among the residents of potential opportunities arising from this affiliation.

It is essential to highlight that these observations were made during the field survey and provide valuable insights into the dynamics of political representation and public sentiment within the studied area.

Fig 5.2 **Electoral decision making and women.**
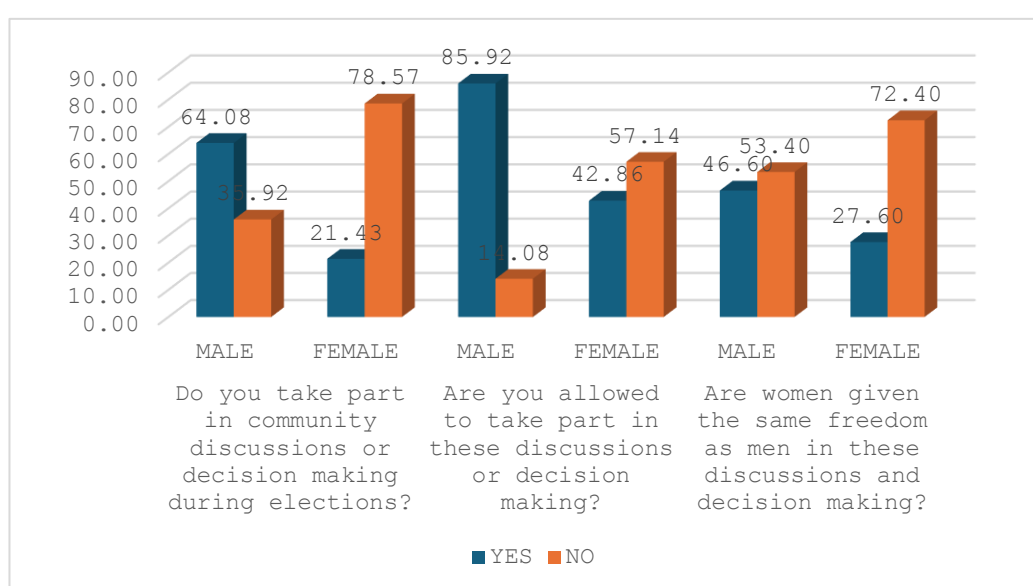
Source: *survey report*

When queried about their involvement in community discussions and electoral decision-making processes, it was revealed that 64.1per cent of men reported their active participation, while only 21.4 per cent of women indicated their involvement. Subsequently, respondents who did not participate were asked whether they were granted permission to partake. The results indicated that 85.9 per cent of men claimed to have been allowed, in contrast to only 42.9 per cent of women who affirmed the same.

Furthermore, among those who were permitted to engage in decision-making processes, a significant proportion of both men and women expressed the belief that women did not possess the same degree of freedom as men. More specifically, over half of the male

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respondents and three-quarters of the female respondents opined that women were not accorded equal freedom in decision-making. This cumulative evidence illuminates the persistent underrepresentation of women and the prevalence of gender-based disparities in electoral decision-making.

Consequently, it is evident that women continue to encounter significant challenges in terms of both their representation and the equitable treatment they receive within the realm of electoral politics.

5.5 Local governing bodies and women

The Nagaland Village Council Act of 1978 mandates the establishment of a Village Council in all recognized villages within Nagaland. The members of these councils are selected by villagers in accordance with prevailing customary practices and traditions, subject to approval by the State Government. Additionally, hereditary village chiefs, GBs and *Angh's*[4] serve as ex-officio members of these councils, possessing voting rights within their respective councils (The Nagaland Village Council Act 1978, *see Annexure-III*). The aforementioned act allows for the selection of council members in accordance with prevailing customary practices and traditions. Consequently, the democratic system of electing council members is frequently absent, and instead, clan leaders nominate individuals in accordance with Ao customs, such as the Chieftainship among the Sumi and the *Angh* system among the Konyaks. While there may be variations in customs and traditions across different communities, a common feature is the exclusion of women from membership in village councils in accordance with customary practices and laws.

The Village Development Board (VDB) operates as a statutory body functioning under the primary village authority. Since 1980, the VDB has been working towards enhancing the economic and social living standards of rural communities by

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[4] At the heart of Konyak society lies the Angh tradition, which holds significant sway over traditional ceremonies, governance structures, and the preservation of social equilibrium. Within this framework, the term "Angh" denotes the authoritative figures akin to "king" or "chief" within Konyak culture.

implementing employment generation and infrastructure development schemes. In Nagaland, over 1,200 Naga villages adhere to the VDB model, which mandates a 25Per cent reservation of seats for women in all VDBs. Remarkably, since its inception in 1980, no village council has contested this policy, or the reserved funds allotted for the same (Dzuvichu, 2016). According to testimony provided by certain female members of the Village Development Board (VDB) in Nagaland, their representation and reservation within the board are merely nominal and do not translate into substantive decision-making authority. In one specific instance, a woman VDB member based in the Mokokchung district of Nagaland told this author that the entire amount of funds allocated to the VDB women members, which amounts to 25Per cent of the total budget, was appropriated by the village council during the pandemic for the distribution of essential goods. But later, they were informed that they should not anticipate the return of the funds.

Although the unopposed reservation of women in governing bodies may appear to be accepted by men, women often have little influence on the functioning of these organizations. For example, during an interaction with a member of the Watsu Mungdang (an Ao women's apex body), it was disclosed that men were willing to include women through nomination rather than election and with minimal voting rights in the ULB. This proposal was made during their fight for a 33 Per cent reservation of seats for women in the 2017 ULB election. This practice of tokenism in a highly patriarchal society means that while women may be represented on paper, they have little say in decision-making.

The present discourse explores the roles and functions of the apex women tribal bodies in the Naga society, which are entrusted with the responsibility of women's welfare and protection as per the author's interaction with some of the members of Apex Women tribal Bodies mentioned below. Specifically, the study examines the activities carried out by organizations such as Konyak Nyupuh Sheko Khong [5](KNSK), Watsu

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[5] The apex women's tribal organization among the Konyak tribe in Nagaland.

Mongdang[6], Akehda Sangtamlar Thsingmjang[7], and Phomla Hoichem [8]in combating social evils and mediating conflicts. In Naga society, women are considered moral keepers and are tasked with maintaining the social fabric by fighting against social vices such as alcohol and drug abuse and crimes related to women and children. They are also perceived to be the guardian in preserving the cultural values and its practices in the society. Additionally, they serve as mediators during conflicts, highlighting the crucial role played by women in promoting social harmony and cohesion. However, despite their contributions to these important areas, women are generally excluded from decision-making processes, which are dominated by men.

The hierarchical structure of the tribal bodies in Naga society is also reflected in the political party structures in the state. Most political parties have a separate women's wing, which is placed under the leadership of male party members. This hierarchical system perpetuates the exclusion of women from leadership positions and decision-making processes.

The discussions above highlight a concerning pattern of gender-based marginalization and exclusion in Nagaland's Local governing system. Although women are given representation within the body, it appears that such representation is not accompanied by the requisite power to influence decision-making processes. Additionally, the diversion of funds intended for the benefit of women in the VDB towards other purposes represents a clear violation of their rights and is likely to exacerbate gender inequalities in the region further.

These findings underscore the need for greater attention to be paid to the issue of gender-based empowerment and representation within the local governing system. It is crucial to ensure that women within the decision-making bodies are not only provided with nominal representation but are also granted the requisite authority to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes.

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[6] The apex women's tribal organization among the Ao tribe in Nagaland.

[7] The apex women's tribal organization among the Sangtam tribe in Nagaland.

[8] The apex women's tribal organization among the Phom tribe in Nagaland.

The Nagaland Municipal Act, 2001, was amended in 2006 to include Section 23A, which ensures a 33 Per cent reservation for women in Urban Local Bodies and Town councils. Despite the formalization of this amendment, its execution remains pending. The issue was brought to light during the 2017 ULB elections, which were met with strong opposition from various apex tribal bodies. The Naga Mother's Association has been leading the charge for the reservation for women campaign, and although the Supreme Court has responded positively to their efforts, the 2017 elections had to be cancelled due to violence, resulting in the death of two protesters and the destruction of the municipal council headquarters in Kohima. Consequently, the then Chief Minister of Nagaland, TR Zeliang, faced compelled resignation amidst the tumultuous circumstances.

The State Election Commission announced that the ULB elections would be held on May 16, 2023. However, this decision has faced opposition from tribal bodies who demand a review of the Nagaland Municipal Act, specifically sections 120 and 123 relating to "Tax on Lands and Buildings." The Ao Senden, an apex body of the Ao tribe, rejected the announcement of the elections, calling it an imperious and domineering act of the state election commission. It has also resolved to stand by its memorandum submitted on 30th May 2017 to the government of Nagaland on the matter of demand for an amendment to the Nagaland Municipal Act 2001, where point 3 of the submitted memorandum read "Section to grand reservation of women should be deleted from the present Act and the same should be replaced by nomination with voting rights" (EMN, 2023). Similarly, the tribal apex bodies of the Rengma, Chakesang, and Sumi have also called for a review or amendment of the Nagaland Municipal Act in a manner that does not infringe upon Article 371(A), which provides for special provisions for Nagaland. These tribal bodies are not opposed to the reservation of seats for women but want it to be implemented in a manner that is in line with their customary rights and have declared not to allow the elections to be held in the jurisdictions without the changes demanded (The Morung Express, 2023). The strong opposition from male led tribal bodies against the reservations of seats for women in the ULB elections reflects the functioning of the tribal bodies and how they

are authorized under the Nagaland Village Council Act to be constituted by various tribes in accordance with their respective traditions, customary practices and usages.

Again, in matters related to social crimes, crimes against a woman in particular, the traditional customary courts are still practiced today. In Nagaland, there are now 17 officially recognized tribes. Each tribe's origin narrative, traditions, usages, culture, and heritage are unique. However, there is a shared custom throughout all Naga tribes, notably in the resolution of conflicts and the swearing of oaths. (Ao, 2017). However, since the traditional customary courts are headed by men and only men, judgments are prone to gender bias in favour of men, such as offering an animal (usually pigs) or a small amount of monetary fine by the culprit to the community in accordance with customary laws. The presence of customary laws and village councils/courts often results in many cases of gender-based violence going unreported (Selvaraj, 2017). There is also the preference of the local courts over the formal legal system due to the time-consuming nature and resource-intensive requirements of the formal legal system, individuals often resort to customary courts for expedient judgments, which can be obtained with minimal expenditure of resources. On the other hand, due to the adoption of Christianity in the state where nearly all tribal populations are Christians, there is a spirit of forgiveness while passing judgment. Since there is no codified customary law to deal with various offenses, many of the cases may not be as effective or gender neutral. The customary laws are susceptible to interpretation by a select group of influential members within the community, typically consisting of male individuals. This assertion is supported by the notable lack of female representation in decision-making bodies within various indigenous communities in the area (Rodrigues, 2017). The majority of Naga societies believed that customary laws were fundamental to their culture and identity. With the British bringing the Naga people under their modern administration through the District Scheduled Act of 1874, the existence of unwritten customary law was understood (Jamir, 2014).

Currently, article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution provides a special safeguard for the customary law of the Nagas. Customary laws are a fundamental aspect of the culture of tribal societies. They encompass the traditional practices, customs, and regulations that have been followed by these societies for centuries. As a constitutive element of the

identity of a tribe, customary laws reflect the distinct and unique features of the tribe's heritage (Baruah, 2017).

Fig 5.3 **Women and Local decision-making bodies**
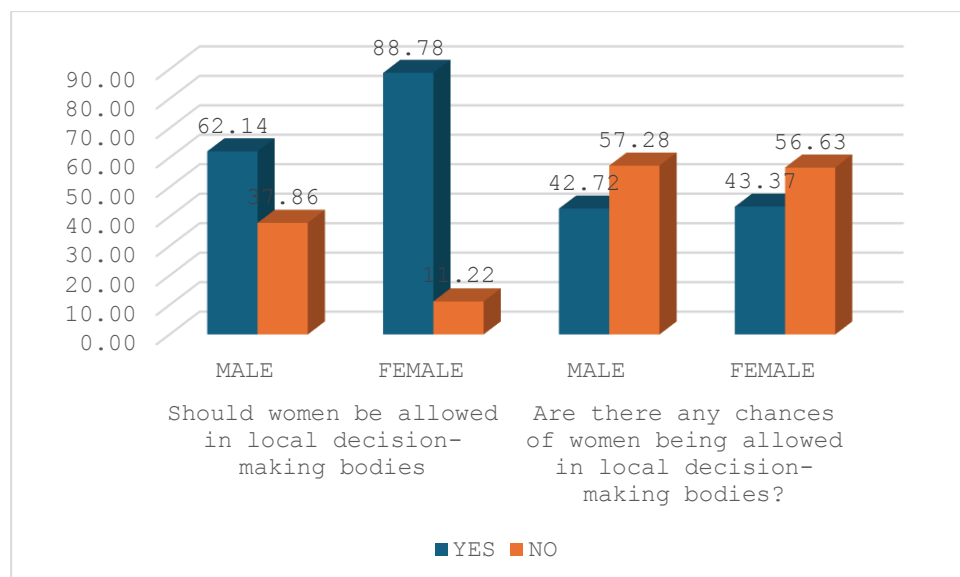
Source: *survey report*

In the realm of decision-making pertaining to the inclusion of women in local decision-making bodies, the survey results indicate that 62.1Per cent of men and 88.8Per cent of women are in favor of allowing women to participate. These findings highlight that a significant portion of approximately one-third of men, alongside a smaller proportion of women, remain resistant to the idea of women's inclusion in such bodies.

Furthermore, when respondents were queried about the prospects of women being granted access to decision-making bodies, a majority of both men and women (more than half) expressed pessimism, asserting that there are no foreseeable opportunities for women to assume such roles. Inquiring into the rationale underlying this sentiment, a predominant response centered around the influence of customary practices and traditions that have been passed down for generations.

These outcomes elucidate the persistence of social norms and cultural traditions as influential factors shaping attitudes and beliefs regarding the involvement of women in decision-making processes.

Fig 5.4 **Local decision-making bodies and electoral politics**
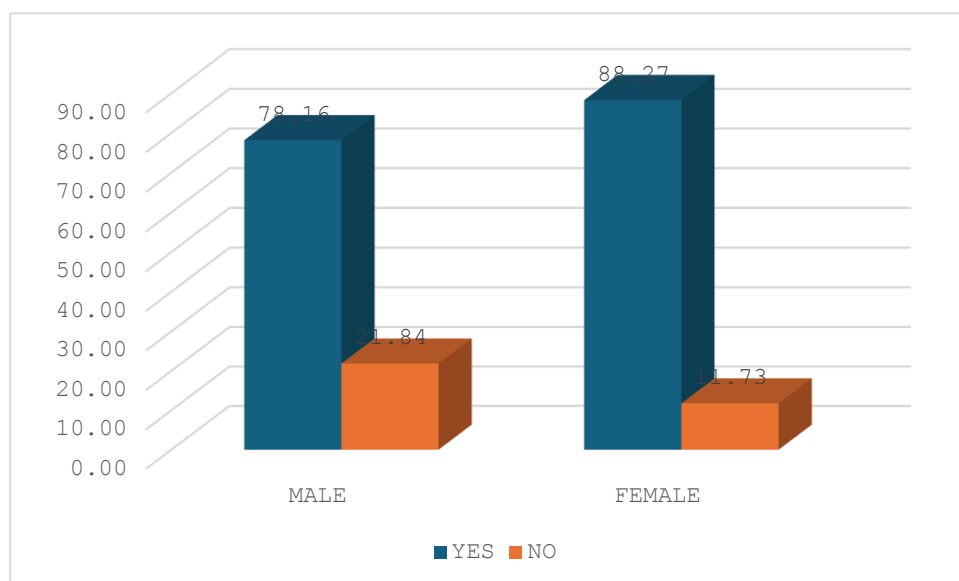
Source: *survey report*

In the context of electoral politics within Naga society, the individual's affiliations to a village, clan, or tribe serve as the central determinant of voting patterns and the fate of a candidate. Consequently, it becomes imperative to comprehend the intricacies of decision-making processes within these communities aiming for a thorough comprehension of the electoral procedures within the state. To delve into this matter, a series of inquiries were conducted concerning decision-making during elections.

When respondents were questioned about the influence of local decision-making bodies on electoral politics, a significant majority (83.25Per cent) acknowledged the existence of such influences. Common instances of influence included the emergence of a consensus candidate from the village or community, endorsement of a particular candidate, and communal appeals for supporting a specific candidate. In such scenarios, it is noteworthy that the customary laws prevailing within the population play a pivotal role, with decision-making powers predominantly vested in men.

5.6 Women and Inheritance

For indigenous Naga communities, the land is considered to be of utmost importance as the foundation of their societies and economies (Jamir,2014). The land is not only essential for survival but also critical for the identity of the Nagas, especially in a society that is deeply rooted in tradition. In Nagaland, land ownership predominantly lies in the hands of private individuals, clans, and village or community entities. Notwithstanding the presence of written land ownership or title documents exclusively in Dimapur town, the region lacks comprehensive documentation for individual, clan, or village ownership of land (Ao, 2019). Due to the absence of codified laws governing land ownership in Nagaland, land dispute settlements are usually done by the utilization of customary laws rooted in longstanding traditions and norms to facilitate resolution. The Naga society being a patrilineal society, the son carries forward the name of the family, and so does the family inheritance. In the tribal Naga society, there is also the existence of inherited land ownership where the ancestral lands are inherited from one generation to the next in such a system of land holding in order to preserve the ownership within the community, it is passed through the male lineage. In such a patrilineal land transfer system, women are never entitled to inheritance. According to Ezung (2011), among the Lothas, there are four types of land with regard to ownership: (1) Village land, (2) *khel* land, (3) family land, and (4) individual land.

Village land refers to the land that falls under the purview of the village governing body and is utilized for the collective benefit of the community. This land is strictly monitored by the village authorities and cannot be owned individually except when granted by the village authority.

Khel land, on the other hand, is owned collectively by a community, which may consist of members belonging to the same clan or those who migrated to the village and settled together. In this landholding system, decision-making authority rests with the eldest male member of the community or group, in conjunction with the eldest male members of all families involved. Ownership of *khel* land is passed down through male lineage and cannot be inherited by women or individuals from other villages or tribes.

Individual land refers to landholdings that are acquired by individuals during their lifetime themselves and are not shared or inherited. These lands are usually acquired through purchase and are if located outside the jurisdiction of the village, women are also eligible to own individual land, and the decision on ownership rests solely with the individual.

Family land is handed down from one generation to the next along the male line. At the death of the father, the family land is divided among the sons. If a family has only one son, all the family land is inherited by him. If the family has no male offspring, then the closest members of the family related through clan and blood inherit the land. Daughters are not entitled to any share of the land and immovable properties. Recently, there has been a notable shift in this issue. Some parents have begun to give a share of their land to their daughter(s). But this act is not traditional and, hence, cannot be taken as a part of Lotha tradition and customs (Ezung, 2011). Although there may be some minor differences in the land inheritance system among the tribes, they are also similar when it comes to very minimal inheritance rights given to women.

Figure 5.5 **Women and Inheritance**
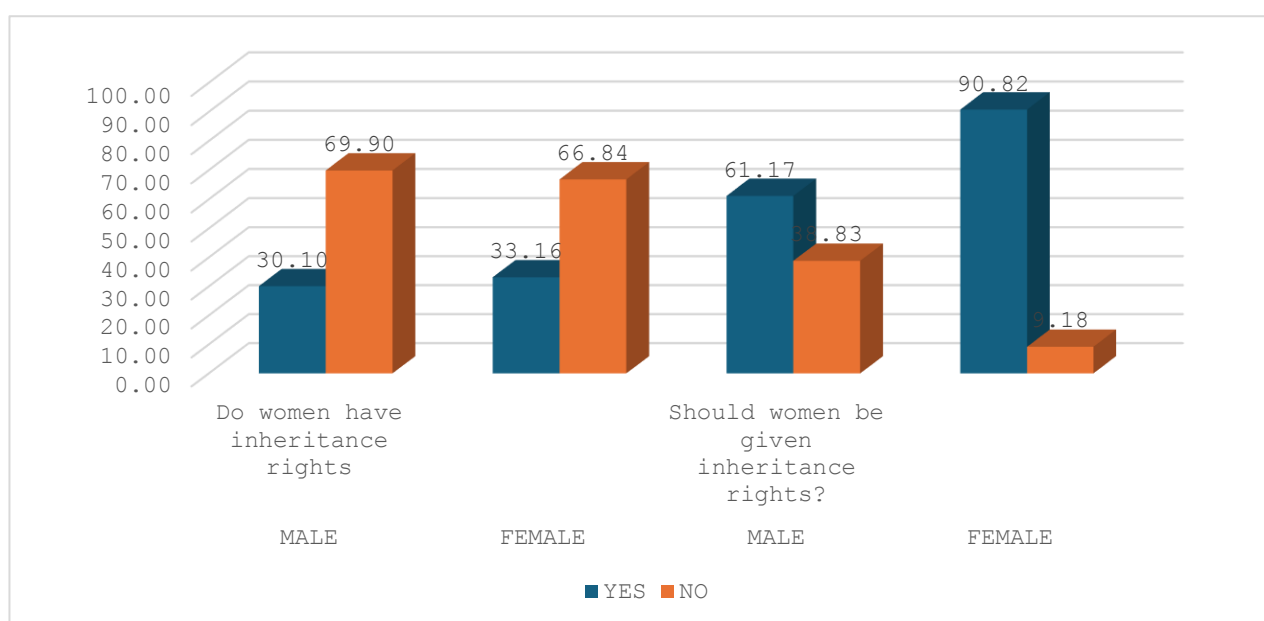
Source: *survey report*

The survey results reveal a nuanced outlook toward women's eligibility for family inheritance among Naga men and women. Specifically, 30.10 per cent of men and 33.16 per cent of women responded affirmatively, while 69.90 per cent of men and 66.84 per cent of women responded negatively. These findings indicate a marginal difference in attitudes between genders, though both display a predominantly negative stance toward women's eligibility for inheritance.

Regarding the question of whether women should be given an inheritance, 61.17 per cent of men and 90.82 per cent of women responded positively, while 38.8 per cent of men and 9.2 per cent of women expressed a negative view. These stark differences in responses underscore the existence of distinct gender-based perspectives on inheritance rights, with women exhibiting a significantly stronger sentiment in favor of such entitlements.

This survey sheds light on the attitudes of Naga men and women towards family inheritance eligibility and the right to inheritance for women. The persistence of traditional norms of patrilineal inheritance, coupled with the demonstrated desire among Naga women for inheritance rights, emphasizes the need for a more equitable approach to inheritance practices within the community.

5.7 A question of Mindset

The Naga society operates under a patriarchal structure characterized by distinctly gendered roles, whereby public life and administration have traditionally been perceived as male domains. At the same time, women have been expected to focus on familial responsibilities. This arrangement, coupled with the patrilineal nature of Naga society, has entrenched the normalization of women's confinement to family affairs, leading to a perception among a certain segment of women that participation in public affairs is not their prerogative. Consequently, women's seemingly significant voter turnout in state elections may not necessarily indicate a shift towards women assuming control or empowerment in politics. Instead, it could be attributed to the widespread practice of proxy voting, whereby votes are sold or cast by another individual on behalf of the voter. A significant number of Naga women advocate for respecting and preserving the current social structure. However, an increasing number of Naga women,

particularly the younger generation, are asserting their rights and demanding inclusion in traditional Naga institutions. The emphasis on masculinity and femininity to delineate strength (associated with men) and weakness (associated with women) is a key indicator of how gender relations and consciousness are constructed and evolving within Naga society. (Kikon, 2017).

The prevalence of vote-selling and proxy voting, as reported by the Morung Express (2023), is a common phenomenon in Naga elections. Moreover, local governing bodies, exemplified by the Kushiabill village council mentioned in The Naga Republic, have utilized their power to issue resolutions that deviate from the democratic principle of "one person, one vote." In this case, the council mandated that only one family member would cast the votes, thereby defying the democratic fabric of equitable suffrage. Such measures aim to alleviate congestion and confusion among voters in Kushiabill village. These practices, alongside other influencing factors, may account for the substantial voter turnout of women in the state. Nevertheless, this data portraying women as empowered voters should be interpreted cautiously, as various underlying dynamics may be at play.

The feedback gathered from the field survey concerning the benefits of Naga customary laws showcased a diverse array of perspectives, each highlighting unique insights into the advantages of these traditional practices.

Many respondents emphasized the pivotal role of customary laws in upholding Naga traditions and culture. According to them, these laws serve as steadfast guardians, ensuring the preservation of Naga identity and customs. Furthermore, they underscored how customary laws cultivate unity and tranquility among communities, offering a time-honored framework for resolving disputes with cultural sensitivity.

Moreover, respondents highlighted the indispensable role of customary laws in maintaining social order and harmony. They pointed out how these laws exert control over the social fabric, ensuring peaceful coexistence among tribal communities and facilitating amicable conflict resolution. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the protective function of customary laws, safeguarding Naga land, resources, and socio-political status, thus securing the community's interests and prosperity.

At the grassroots level, Naga customary laws were lauded for their effectiveness in addressing everyday challenges faced by communities. They serve as a mechanism for resolving disputes within villages, promoting mutual respect, understanding, and hospitality among members, thereby nurturing a sense of solidarity and cooperation.

Interestingly some respondents emphasized that customary law also encourages gender equality which on enquiring further was stated that to them gender equality means taking care of the women flocks and women not being subjected to various decimations like their counterpart in other parts of India. The responses underscore the indispensable role of customary laws as the cornerstone of Naga society. They not only preserve tradition, culture, and social values but also promote unity, justice, and peace within communities. As the Naga community advances its nation-building endeavors, these laws are deemed crucial in building unity among sub-groups and forging a collective identity grounded in shared heritage and common values. Though it preserves the Naga identity and its resources along with maintain harmony in the society a question will always remain as long as the custodian of the customary laws is only by one gender (men) without the active involvement of women in the process.

5.8 Conclusion

Naga politics has long been shaped by a male-dominated structure, where leadership roles and decision-making authority are largely concentrated in the hands of men. As a result, women often face systemic barriers to political participation, rooted in patriarchal norms and exclusionary customary practices. This enduring inequality not only hinders the progress of women but also limits the broader social and political development of Naga society.

Encouraging women's political engagement calls for a deep and sustained cultural shift. This change must begin at the grassroots level, particularly within the family where early political socialization occurs. The home plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of gender roles and political agency. It is therefore essential to promote gender-equitable practices within households, including the reassessment of patrilineal

inheritance systems where applicable and the conscious avoidance of customs that restrict women's opportunities. Inculcating equality from a young age can gradually erode the entrenched hierarchies that extend into public and political life.

However, change cannot be confined to the private sphere. There is a pressing need to challenge broader societal structures and attitudes that limit women's roles in politics. This involves building an environment that supports women's political involvement through access to education, resources, capacity-building opportunities, and legal protections. Equally significant is the need to actively include women in traditional leadership institutions, where their voices have often been sidelined. Bringing women into customary decision-making spaces not only strengthens democratic representation but also affirms that tradition and gender equality can coexist.

Alongside structural reforms, promotion of a collective mindset grounded in respect, inclusivity, and gender justice is vital. Naga customary laws, like all living traditions, must evolve to reflect the changing aspirations and realities of society. Ensuring women's full political participation is not merely a matter of individual rights, it enhances governance, strengthens peace and stability, and promotes a more just and equitable society. Moreover, such progress need not come at the expense of cultural identity; rather, it can enrich and sustain it.

Achieving this vision demands a comprehensive and collaborative effort. Legal reform, education, public awareness, and community dialogue must work in tandem to shift both attitudes and institutions. Crucially, this task must involve all sectors of society women and men, youth and elders, civil society organizations, and state actors. Only through such inclusive collaboration can Naga society move toward a future where women participate fully and equally in all spheres of political life, including within traditional governance structures.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Suggestions

6.1 Introduction

This study presents a thorough analysis of women's participation dynamics, shedding light on various facets of political engagement. Across four comprehensive chapters, the study delves deep into the intricacies of women's involvement, revealing key findings and insights that contribute to a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in political participation. Additionally, the following recommendations are provided for policymakers, aimed at addressing the issues uncovered in this analysis. The chapter is structured into the following sections:

(i)   Conclusions of the study
(ii)   Suggestions for the policymakers
(iii)   Suggestions for the further research

(i) Conclusions of the study

The objective 1 of the thesis delves into an in-depth analysis of voting behavior in Nagaland, uncovering significant insights across various demographic factors. Gender disparities play a pivotal role, with female voter turnout consistently surpassing that of males in numerous Assembly Elections, as evidenced by data indicating an average female turnout of 86.34 per cent compared to 92.64 per cent for males. This trend reflects the influence of familial and spousal support on female voting decisions, with 40.96 per cent citing such influence compared to 14.36 per cent of males. Conversely, 39.11 per cent of males prioritize voting for what they perceive as best for the people, compared to only 17.02 per cent of females. Moreover, age emerges as a crucial determinant, with a clear trend of increasing voting rates with advancing age. For instance, while 18-35-year-olds exhibit a turnout of 68.60 per cent, this figure rises significantly to 97.56 per cent for those aged 36-60, and 92.34 per cent for those aged 60 and above. Educational qualification, contrary to expectations, shows a reverse relationship with voting turnout, with the highest turnout observed among illiterate

individuals (90.91 per cent) and the lowest among those with graduate and above qualifications (80.72 per cent). Marital status also influences voting behavior, with married individuals demonstrating the highest turnout (92.56 per cent), followed by widowed individuals (94.12 per cent), while unmarried individuals exhibit a lower turnout of 79.86 per cent. Moreover, urban areas generally exhibit higher voter turnout rates compared to rural areas across both genders, with urban females exhibiting a higher propensity for voting (86.15 per cent) compared to their rural counterparts (82.95 per cent). These findings underscore the complexity of voting behavior in Nagaland, influenced by a myriad of socio-economic factors, and provide valuable insights for policymakers aiming to promote inclusive electoral participation.

Objective 2 of the study delves into the analysis of political awareness in Nagaland which reveals significant trends influenced by gender, educational qualifications, age, and regional variations. Data shows discernible gender disparities, with females predominantly categorized as "Less Aware" and males slightly more represented in the "Highly Aware" group. However, this trend varies across educational levels, where higher qualifications are consistently associated with greater political awareness, regardless of gender. Notably, females with higher educational qualifications often exhibit slightly higher levels of political awareness compared to their male counterparts, suggesting that education plays a crucial role in enhancing awareness among women.

Age also emerges as a significant factor influencing political awareness, with younger individuals (aged 18-35) generally exhibiting higher levels of awareness compared to older age groups. This trend is consistent across most districts, except for some variations observed in specific regions like Mon district.

Furthermore, the relationship between political awareness and political participation is complex. For example, while Mokokchung district shows high levels of awareness but low participation, Kiphire district, despite having lower awareness, exhibits the highest political participation among the districts studied. This suggests that political awareness does not always directly translate into political participation, indicating the need for

further investigation into the factors that drive political engagement beyond awareness levels.

The ANOVA results reveal significant disparities in political participation, particularly among men, where there is considerable variation across districts. This suggests that men's political engagement is influenced by local contexts, possibly shaped by factors such as community organization, leadership dynamics, and access to political resources. In contrast, women's political participation appears more consistent across districts, with no significant differences observed, indicating that their engagement may be less influenced by regional variations and more by overarching socio-cultural factors.

Moreover, the analysis of political awareness reveals a persistent gender disparity, with men generally showing higher levels of awareness, particularly in the moderately and highly aware categories. This trend is consistent across the districts studied, suggesting that while women are more represented in the less aware category, men are more likely to be politically informed.

The multiple comparison analysis further highlights distinct differences in political participation between specific district pairs, particularly between Mokokchung and Mon, as well as Mokokchung and Longleng. These differences could be attributed to varying degrees of community involvement, leadership influence, and access to political resources across these districts. However, the absence of significant differences between other district pairs, such as Mon and Longleng, suggests shared socio-cultural factors or similar political dynamics influencing participation levels.

Overall, the findings underscore the complexity of political participation and awareness in Nagaland, shaped by a combination of gender, regional context, and socio-cultural factors. While men's political engagement varies significantly across districts, women's participation remains relatively uniform, reflecting broader systemic influences. The analysis also highlights the persistent gender disparity in political awareness, with men generally being more informed than women. These insights point to the need for targeted interventions and strategies to address the underlying factors

contributing to these disparities, ultimately promoting more inclusive and equitable political engagement across the region.

The analysis of women's roles in Naga society reveals their multifaceted involvement, which extends far beyond electoral politics. While traditional measures of political participation, such as voting, suggest parity between men and women, a deeper examination of other political activities uncovers significant gender disparities. Men demonstrate higher engagement across various political activities, including campaigning, attending meetings, and joining political parties. In contrast, both genders show limited involvement in fundraising, suggesting that financial contributions to political causes are not a primary focus for either group.

The notable gender gap in political engagement can be attributed to several factors. Societal norms and expectations play a crucial role, often discouraging women from active participation in political processes. Women may face greater pressure to adhere to traditional gender roles, limiting their political involvement. Additionally, access to resources and opportunities is another critical factor; women may encounter barriers such as limited financial resources and restricted access to political networks, hindering their ability to participate fully in political activities.

Moreover, institutional barriers, such as biased recruitment processes and inadequate representation in decision-making bodies, further exacerbate the underrepresentation of women in politics. These systemic challenges contribute to the observed imbalance in political participation, where women are often marginalized.

Beyond the political arena, however, women in Naga society play vital roles in various other domains. They are deeply involved in religious activities, often taking on significant responsibilities within church communities, although decision-making roles typically remain male-dominated. Women also contribute to economic upliftment through entrepreneurship and involvement in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), as well as in business activities.

In the social welfare sphere, women are active in advocating against crimes, particularly those involving women and children, and combating social evils through Non-

Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and women welfare societies. These organizations, often referred to as women tribal bodies, also engage in peacekeeping efforts and other community initiatives.

Culturally, women play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting the morals, values, and traditions of Naga society to future generations. Their involvement in cultural preservation underscores their importance in maintaining the continuity and integrity of Naga heritage.

The study underscores the importance of educational qualifications in shaping political awareness and highlights gender and age as critical dimensions influencing this awareness. Additionally, the complex relationship between awareness and participation suggests that efforts to enhance political engagement must consider a broader range of factors beyond mere awareness. Addressing these disparities through targeted educational and outreach initiatives could lead to more informed and active political participation across all demographic groups in Nagaland.

While women may face significant challenges in political participation, their contributions to Naga society are substantial and diverse. They serve as pillars of strength in areas such as economics, social welfare, cultural preservation, and peacebuilding. Addressing the barriers to political participation and promoting gender equality in all spheres of life are essential steps toward creating a more inclusive and representative society. By empowering women and recognizing their contributions, Naga society can see greater unity, growth, and progress.

In objective 3 the analysis of interest in politics among different demographic groups, as depicted in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, underscores significant disparities and intriguing trends in political engagement. Firstly, examining gender differences in political interest (Figure 4.1) reveals a stark contrast between men and women. While over half of men (51.46 per cent) express a strong interest in politics, only around a quarter of women (27.04 per cent) share the same level of enthusiasm. Conversely, women show a slightly higher level of moderate interest (35.71 per cent) compared to men (27.18 per cent). However, a substantial proportion of women (37.24 per cent) express no interest in politics, contrasting with 21.36 per cent of men. This data highlights pronounced

gender disparities in political engagement, with men generally exhibiting greater interest.

Secondly, examining the relationship between education levels and political engagement (Figure 4.2) reveals intriguing patterns. Among illiterate individuals, the majority (54.55 per cent) express no interest in politics, while smaller percentages indicate some level of interest. However, as education levels increase, the trend shifts. Those with education up to the primary level also show a significant proportion with no interest, although lower than the illiterate group, while those expressing some interest increase. Notably, individuals with education up to matriculation display the highest percentage expressing interest in politics at 40.82 per cent, followed by those with education up to 12th pass at 23.08 per cent. Conversely, the proportion expressing no interest decreases progressively with higher education levels.

Thus, the data highlights the multifaceted relationship between demographics, education, and political engagement. It underscores the need to address barriers to political participation, particularly among women and less educated individuals. Additionally, the findings emphasize the pivotal role of education in shaping political awareness and engagement, with higher education levels generally associated with increased interest in politics. Overall, promoting inclusivity and educational initiatives are crucial for encouraging greater civic participation across all segments of society.

The binary logistic regression analysis on factors influencing women's participation in casting votes within the Naga community provides insightful findings, particularly highlighting the significance of age and occupation in shaping women's voting behavior.

Age emerges as a significant predictor of women's likelihood to cast votes, with a coefficient of 2.201 and a p-value of 0.009. This indicates that older women, particularly those aged 36-60 and 60+, are significantly more likely to vote compared to younger women aged 18-35. This finding aligns with observations from the field survey, where older women were found to have more exposure to political events and discussions over time, leading to their increased interest and participation in politics.

Occupation emerges as a critical determinant of women's voting behavior, with women employed in sectors other than agriculture showing a higher likelihood of casting votes. The coefficient of -0.999 and a p-value of 0.006 suggest that women employed in sectors other than Agriculture, such as service, self-employment, or unemployed are more likely to participate in the electoral process. This finding underscores the importance of occupation as a determinant of political engagement, potentially reflecting the influence of economic factors and access to information on voting behavior.

However, other demographic, cultural, and social factors examined do not show significant associations with women's voting behavior. Factors such as tribe, education level, residence, party affiliation, awareness, family political decision-making, perception of equal opportunities in politics, level of participation, influence of customary laws, freedom of expression in electoral decision-making, presence of women in village/town councils, and the influence of local decision-making bodies do not significantly influence women's likelihood of casting votes.

The insights from the field survey further elucidate the contextual factors shaping women's political participation in Nagaland. Societal norms, cultural expectations, perceptions regarding customary laws, and evolving societal perspectives regarding women's roles in decision-making processes play crucial roles in influencing women's political engagement.

Overall, while age and occupation emerge as significant predictors of women's voting behavior, other factors such as societal norms, cultural practices, and evolving perspectives also contribute to shaping women's political participation. Efforts to promote women's political engagement should consider these multifaceted influences and address barriers to ensure greater inclusivity and participation in the electoral process.

The binary logistic regression analysis was also conducted examining the factors associated with women's political participation, particularly their likelihood of contesting elections, sheds light on several critical aspects within the context of the Naga community.

Demographic factors such as age, tribe, occupation, educational level and residence do not significantly predict women's participation in contesting elections. Among social factors, awareness emerges as a significant predictor of political participation, with a coefficient of -0.145 and a p-value of 0.629. This implies that as awareness of political issues increases, the odds of women's participation in electoral activities also increase, highlighting the importance of education and awareness-raising initiatives. However, the perception of equal opportunities in politics and family political decision-making do not significantly influence women's likelihood of contesting elections, as indicated by their non-significant p-values. Cultural factors such as the presence of women in village/town councils also show a significant association with women's political participation, with a coefficient of 0.844 and a p-value of 0.018. This suggests that the representation of women in local decision-making bodies positively impacts their political aspirations, emphasizing the importance of providing leadership opportunities at the grassroots level. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of societal attitudes and opportunities for women political engagement in influencing their participation in contesting election.

The binary logistic regression analysis on factors influencing women's political participation, particularly their likelihood of participating in political activities, provides valuable insights into the dynamics within the Naga community. Additionally, the open-ended responses shed light on the challenges faced by Naga women in politics, enriching our understanding of the contextual factors at play.

Demographic factors such as age exhibit a statistically significant association with women's political participation, with a coefficient of -0.94 and a p-value of 0.021. This indicates that younger women are more likely to participate in political activities, highlighting the potential for generational shifts in attitudes towards governance.

Among social factors, awareness emerges as a significant predictor of political participation, with a coefficient of 1.15 and a p-value of 0.004. This suggests that as awareness of political issues increases, the odds of women's participation in political activities also increase substantially, underlining the importance of education and awareness-raising initiatives.

However, factors such as family political decision-making and the perception of equal opportunities in politics do not significantly influence women's likelihood of political participation, as indicated by their non-significant p-values. Cultural factors such as the influence of customary laws on Naga women in decision-making and the presence of women in village/town councils do not show statistically significant associations with political participation. However, the influence of local decision-making bodies in electoral politics under cultural factors emerged as a significant predictor, with a coefficient of -1.16 and a p-value of 0.033. This suggests that women perceive a significant barrier to their political participation due to the influence exerted by local decision-making bodies.

The open-ended responses further elucidate the challenges faced by Naga women in politics, including customary laws and traditions that exclude women from decision-making processes, gender stereotyping that undermines their leadership abilities, and a lack of support and opportunities. Additionally, patriarchal mindsets and cultural barriers, limited representation in political decision-making, and a lack of platforms and support systems further hinder women's participation in politics.

In conclusion, Naga women in politics encounter deeply ingrained gender biases, systemic inequalities, and cultural norms that pose significant challenges to their full participation. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to challenge stereotypes, reform customary laws, and create a more inclusive political environment that empowers women to actively engage in governance and decision-making processes.

Objective 4 of our exploration focuses on customary laws and traditions. The Naga society, with its diverse tribal communities and rich cultural heritage, is deeply rooted in customary laws that govern various aspects of life, including land ownership, marriage, inheritance, and dispute resolution. However, these customary laws, while varied among tribes and villages, exhibit a patriarchal nature where decision-making powers traditionally lie in the hands of men. This patriarchal structure, combined with deeply ingrained gender norms and practices, significantly influences women's roles and participation in society and politics.

The data presented in Fig 5.1 from the survey sheds light on the influence of customary laws on women's participation in decision-making within the Naga society. A significant majority of both men (66.1 per cent) and women (81.6 per cent) reported that customary laws exert some degree of influence on women's decision-making abilities. This indicates a widespread acknowledgment within the community that customary laws impact women's agency and autonomy in decision-making processes.

Moreover, when asked about whether customary laws promote gender equality, responses diverged significantly between men and women. While two-thirds of men responded affirmatively, two-thirds of women responded negatively. This disparity highlights the discrepancy between perceptions of gender equality under customary laws, with women expressing greater scepticism about the extent to which these laws promote gender parity.

Additionally, a substantial majority of both men (64.1 per cent) and women (75 per cent) agreed that customary laws should be flexible enough to adapt to changes. This consensus underscores the recognition within the community that customary laws need to evolve to accommodate shifting societal norms and dynamics. However, despite this acknowledgment, there appears to be a gap between the perceived need for adaptability and the actual implementation of flexible legal frameworks. Thus, the data underscores the significant influence of customary laws on women's participation in decision-making and the promotion of gender equality within the Naga society. While there is a consensus on the need for flexibility and adaptation in customary laws, there remains a discrepancy between perceptions and practical implementation. Addressing this gap requires concerted efforts to reform customary legal frameworks to better align with principles of gender equality and women's empowerment, ultimately moving towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

The data presented in Figure 5.2 sheds light on the disparity in women's involvement in electoral decision-making processes within the Naga community. According to the survey findings, a significant gender gap exists in active participation in community discussions and electoral decision-making. While 64.1 per cent of men reported their active engagement in these processes, only 21.4 per cent of women indicated their

involvement. This substantial difference underscores the underrepresentation of women in decision-making forums, reflecting broader societal dynamics that limit women's access to political participation.

Moreover, the disparity is further compounded by the unequal treatment experienced by women even when they are granted permission to participate. Among those who were allowed to engage in decision-making, 85.9 per cent of men claimed to have been granted permission, whereas only 42.9 per cent of women affirmed the same. This discrepancy highlights the existence of barriers that disproportionately affect women's opportunities to contribute to electoral decision-making processes, despite nominal permission being granted.

Furthermore, the data reveals a perception among both men and women that women do not possess the same degree of freedom as men in decision-making. Over half of the male respondents and three-quarters of the female respondents expressed the belief that women are not accorded equal freedom in decision-making. This perception underscores entrenched gender-based disparities and biases within the electoral sphere, perpetuating a system that marginalizes women and limits their agency in shaping community outcomes. The findings from Figure 5.2 underscore the significant challenges faced by women in accessing and participating in electoral decision-making processes within the Naga community. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to promote gender equality, eliminate discriminatory practices, and create inclusive spaces where women's voices are valued and heard in shaping community affairs.

The data presented in Figure 5.3 provides insights into attitudes towards the inclusion of women in local decision-making bodies within the Naga community. According to the survey results, a significant majority of both men and women express support for allowing women to participate in local decision-making bodies, with 62.1 per cent of men and 88.8 per cent of women in favor of such inclusion. However, it is notable that approximately one-third of men, alongside a smaller proportion of women, remain resistant to the idea of women's participation in these bodies. This indicates the presence of entrenched gender biases and resistance to change within a segment of the

community. Furthermore, when respondents were asked about the prospects of women being granted access to decision-making bodies, a majority of both men and women expressed pessimism. More than half of the respondents, regardless of gender, indicated that there are no foreseeable opportunities for women to assume such roles. This pessimistic outlook suggests a prevailing belief among community members that existing social norms and cultural traditions pose significant barriers to women's participation in decision-making processes. The rationale underlying this sentiment, as highlighted by respondents, often revolves around the influence of customary practices and traditions that have been passed down for generations. These findings underscore the enduring impact of cultural norms and traditions on shaping attitudes and beliefs regarding gender roles and women's involvement in governance and decision-making. Thus, the data from Figure 5.3 underscores the complex interplay between cultural traditions, social norms, and attitudes towards gender equality within the Naga community. While there is notable support for women's inclusion in local decision-making bodies, significant challenges and resistance to change persist, reflecting the need for targeted efforts to address entrenched gender biases and promote greater gender equity in governance structures.

The data provided in Figure 5.4 sheds light on the influence of local decision-making bodies on electoral politics within Naga society. According to the survey results, a significant majority of respondents 83.25 per cent acknowledged the existence of influences exerted by local decision-making bodies on electoral politics. This indicates that within Naga communities, decisions made by local governing bodies play a substantial role in shaping electoral outcomes and determining the fate of candidates during elections.

The survey identified common instances of such influence, including the emergence of a consensus candidate from the village or community, endorsement of a particular candidate by local authorities, and communal appeals for supporting a specific candidate. These findings suggest that the decisions and endorsements made by local decision-making bodies carry significant weight in influencing voter behavior and electoral outcomes. Moreover, the survey highlights the pivotal role played by customary laws prevailing within the population in shaping decision-making processes

related to electoral politics. The data underscores that decision-making powers within these local bodies are predominantly vested in men, reflecting the patriarchal nature of traditional governance structures within Naga communities.

In conclusion, the data from Figure 5.4 underscores the importance of understanding the influence of local decision-making bodies on electoral politics within the Naga society. It highlights the significant role played by these bodies in shaping electoral outcomes and emphasizes the need to consider customary laws and traditional governance structures in efforts to promote democratic practices and inclusivity within the electoral process.

Figure 5.5 presents insightful data on the attitudes of Naga men and women towards women's eligibility for inheritance within the family. The survey results indicate that there is a nuanced outlook among both Naga men and women regarding women's eligibility for family inheritance. Approximately 30.10 per cent of men and 33.16 per cent of women responded affirmatively, suggesting a marginal difference in attitudes between genders. However, the majority of both men (69.90 per cent) and women (66.84 per cent) responded negatively to women's eligibility for inheritance. This indicates a prevailing sentiment against women's inheritance rights within the community, albeit with a slight variation between men and women.

In contrast, when asked whether women should be given inheritance rights, the responses diverged significantly between men and women. While 61.17 per cent of men expressed support for women's inheritance rights, a substantial 90.82 per cent of women responded positively. Conversely, 38.8 per cent of men and only 9.2 per cent of women expressed a negative view on this matter. These stark differences in responses highlight distinct gender-based perspectives on inheritance rights, with women exhibiting a notably stronger sentiment in favor of such entitlements compared to men.

Overall, the survey illuminates the persistence of traditional norms of patrilineal inheritance within the Naga society, wherein men predominantly hold decision-making powers regarding inheritance. However, it also underscores the demonstrated desire among Naga women for inheritance rights, indicating a growing recognition of the need

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for a more equitable approach to inheritance practices within the community. The data from Figure 5.5 underscores the importance of addressing gender disparities in inheritance rights and advocating for greater gender equality within the Naga society. It emphasizes the need for cultural and societal shifts to promote women's empowerment and ensure their equal participation in familial and societal decision-making processes, including inheritance rights.

(ii) Suggestions for the Policymakers.

1. Educational Initiatives: Integrate civics and political education into school curricula and conduct adult education programs in rural areas. Limited access to education and resources often leads to a lack of political literacy among women, particularly in rural areas. Empowering women with a deeper understanding of political processes and their rights as citizens is crucial for promoting active engagement in political discourse and decision-making. Without proper education, women may be disenfranchised and unable to advocate for their needs and interests effectively.

2. **Community-Based Awareness Programs**: Develop and implement workshops, seminars, and outreach activities in collaboration with local leaders and civil society organizations. Community-based awareness programs are essential for raising awareness about the importance of women's participation in politics. By engaging directly with communities, we can challenge existing norms and perceptions, empower women to take on leadership roles, and promote a culture of inclusivity and participation in governance.

3. **Gender-Responsive Policies and Quotas**: Advocate for the implementation of gender-responsive policies, including quotas for women in electoral candidate lists. Despite constituting a significant portion of the population, women remain underrepresented in political institutions. Implementing gender-responsive policies and quotas is essential to ensure equitable representation of women in politics, thus promoting diversity and inclusivity in decision-making processes.

4**. Leadership Training and Mentorship Programs**: Establish leadership training and mentorship programs tailored specifically for women. Women often lack access to networks and support systems crucial for political leadership. By providing training and mentorship opportunities, we can equip women with the skills, knowledge, and support needed to navigate the political landscape effectively and confidently.

5. **Enabling Environments**: Create environments that support women's leadership by ensuring access to resources and implementing protective measures against barriers and challenges. Access to resources such as funding and infrastructure is essential for women to enter and succeed in politics. Additionally, protective measures are needed to address gender-based discrimination and violence, ensuring that women can participate safely and effectively in decision-making processes.

6. **Promotion of Inclusive Dialogue**: Introduce and promote inclusive dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders through roundtable discussions, policy forums, and joint initiatives. Inclusive dialogue is crucial for challenging cultural norms and institutional biases that hinder women's political participation. By bringing together government agencies, civil society organizations, and community leaders, we can promote gender equality and create a more inclusive political environment.

7. **Legal Reforms**: Advocate for legal reforms that support women's political participation and address discriminatory practices. Legal reforms are essential for ensuring that women's rights are protected in political processes. By revising electoral laws, strengthening legal protections against gender-based violence and discrimination, and enforcing existing laws, we can create a more equitable and democratic political landscape where women have equal opportunities to participate and contribute.

By implementing these concrete suggestions, policymakers can work towards promoting a more inclusive and democratic political landscape in Nagaland one in which women have equal opportunities to participate in and contribute to decision-making processes.

(iv) Suggestions for further study

1. Historical Perspective: Investigate the historical evolution of customary laws and traditions in Nagaland and how they have influenced the political participation of women over time.

2. Legal Frameworks: Analyze existing legal frameworks in Nagaland or any other state and assess their compatibility with promoting gender equality and women's political participation. This could involve examining both formal legal structures and customary laws.

3. Comparative studies: Conduct comparative studies with other tribal societies in India. Special focus on the tribes in Northeastern states of India can be done in the area of women's empowerment and customary laws.

6.2 Limitations of the study

1. The study was limited to only four districts in the state of Nagaland.

2. Customary laws and traditional practices in Nagaland not only vary from tribe to tribe but also between villages under the umbrella of a tribe. Moreover, the absence of a written codified law may lead to variations in outcomes in different areas of the state.

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APPENDICES

ANNEXURE-I: QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Background Data of the respondents**				
District & Polling station				
Constituency				
Age	18-35	36-60	60 and above	
Gender	Agri	Service Govt/Pvt	Self-employed	Unemployed
Occupation				
Level of Education				
Tribe	Rural		Urban	
Residence				
Marital Status				

2. Household management	
Who is the owner of the house?	1-Father/Husband 2-Mother/Wife 3-You 4-Others(Please specify)
Who takes the major decisions at home?	1- Father/Husband 2-Mother/Wife 3-You 4-Jointly
Who controls the financial matters at home?	1- Father/Husband 2-Mother/Wife 3-You 4-Jointly
Who takes political decisions at home?	1- Father/Husband 2-Mother/Wife 3-You 4-Jointly

3. Political Awareness	
Do you know the minimum age for voting?	1-Yes 2-No

Do you know the first Chief Minister of Nagaland?	1-Yes 2-No
Do you know the present Chief Minister of Nagaland?	1-Yes 2-No
Do you know who the present Governor of Nagaland is?	1-Yes 2-No
Who is the MLA from your constituency?	1-Aware 2-Not aware
Do you know in which year the first Assembly Election was held in Nagaland?	1-Yes 2-No
Do you know the number of Assembly Constituencies in Nagaland?	1-Yes 2-No
Do you know the present PM of India?	1-Yes 2-No
Which coalition government is in power in Nagaland	
Which Coalition government is in power at the center	

4. Electoral Participation	
Do you have an interest in politics?	1-Yes 2-No 3-To some extent
If no, is gender a reason for not having an interest in politics?	1-Yes 2-No
what is your opinion on the status of women's political participation compared to men's?	1-More than men 2-Less than men 3-At par(equal)
Is women's participation in elections considered bad in your society?	1-Yes 2-No
Had any male members in your community asked you to abstain from participating in the election?	1-Yes 2-No
If you have the opportunity, will you contest in the election?	1-Yes 2-No
If you take part in politics, will you get help from male members (for women) or female members (for men)?	1-Yes 2-No

	3-To some extent
	4-Don't know
Did you cast your vote in the last Assembly election?	1-Yes
	2-No
If Yes, what mattered to you more while deciding whom to vote for? *(Please tick all that apply)*	1-I vote for the party that my parents/spouse supported
	2-I vote for the party that will make me better off
	3-I vote for the party that is best for the people as a whole
	4- I vote for the party with the best leader
	5-I vote for the best candidate irrespective of party
	6-None of these
If you did not vote, which statements describe your decision not to vote?	1-Did not like any candidate.
	2-I am not interested in politics.
	3-There is no point in voting because my vote will not change anything.
	4-I was intimidated to not vote.
	5-Others (please specify

Do you think your vote affects how the state should be run?	1-Has no effect 2-Has effect 3-Don't Know/Can't say
Did you vote for a candidate of your own free will, or were you motivated by someone else?	1-independent decision 2-Motivated by others 3-Any other reason (please specify)
Did you participate in any election-related activities?	1-Collecting funds for the candidate 2-Attending election meetings/rallies 3-Taking part in the election campaign/distributing pamphlets 4-Others (Please specify)
Are you a member of any political party?	1-Yes 2-No
How interested would you say you are in politics/public affairs?	1-A great deal 2-To some extent 3-Not at all
Are you satisfied with the performance of the MLA who represents your constituency?	1-Fully satisfied 2-Somewhat satisfied 3-Somewhat dissatisfied 4-Fully dissatisfied

	5-Cant say/D.k 6-Confused
Do you feel that electoral politics in Nagaland is dominated by men?	1-Yes 2-No
Are you in favor of the reservation of seats for women in elected bodies?	1-Yes 2-No
Do customary laws impart gender EQUALITY?	1-Yes 2-No
Are Naga women given equal opportunity as men in Politics?	1-Yes 2-No
Do you take part in discussions or decision-making during elections?	1-Yes 2-No
Are women given the same freedom as men to express and decide regarding electoral decision-making?	1-Yes 2-No
Do customary laws hold back Naga women in decision-making?	1-Yes 2-No 3-To some extent

Are Naga women capable of competing with Naga men in the political field?	1-Yes 2-No
Should women be included in village councils/ Town councils?	1-Yes 2-No
Are there any chances of women being allowed in the village/town governing body?	1-Yes 2-No
Should customary laws be flexible enough to adapt to changes?	1-Yes 2-No 3-Not sure
Are women eligible for inheritance?	1-Yes 2-No
If "*NO*" Should women be given the right to inheritance?	1-Yes 2-No
Does customary law safeguard and protect the rights of women in its entirety?	1-Yes 2-No 3-Not sure
Do you support women taking part in politics?	1-Yes 2-No

Do you think the local decision-making body influences electoral politics?	1-Yes 2-No
What is the biggest challenge of the Naga women in the politics of Nagaland?	
What are the benefits of customary law?	
What are some important roles played by women in your society apart from politics?	

ANNEXURE-II: Constitution Article

"Article 371A in Constitution of India

371A. Special provision with respect to the State of Nagaland

(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, --

(a)no Act of Parliament in respect of—

(i)religious or social practices of the Nagas,

(ii)Naga customary law and procedure,

(iii)administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law,

(iv)ownership and transfer of land and its resources,

shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides."

ANNEXURE: III

"Nagaland Village Councils Act, 1978
(Nagaland Act No. 1 of 1979)

1. Short Title, extent, and commencement. - (1) This Act may be called the [Nagaland Village Councils Act, 1978].

(2) It extends to the whole of Nagaland.

(3) It shall come into force on such date as the State Government may by notification in the Gazette, appoint, and different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this Act.

2. Definition. - (a) In this Act unless the context otherwise requires "appropriate authority" or "competent authority" means an authority having administrative jurisdiction with whatever designation called and notified by Government from time to time.

(b)" Assembly" means the Nagaland Legislative Assembly.

(c)" Gazette" or" the Gazette" means Nagaland Gazette.

(d)" prescribed" means prescribed by rules and made under this Act,

(e)" State Government" means the Government of Nagaland.

[(f)" tribal councils" means the various tribal councils/hohos/unions/organizations existing in Nagaland, and being constituted by the various tribes in accordance with their respective traditions, customary practices and usages.]

Chapter I

Village Council

3. Constitutions. - Every recognized Village shall have a Village Council.

Explanation. - Village means and includes an area recognized as a Village as such by the Government of Nagaland. An area in order to be a Village under this act shall fulfil the following conditions namely:

(a) The land in the area belong to the population of that area or given to them by the Government of Nagaland, if the land in question is a Government land or is land given to them by the lawful owner of the land; and

(b) The Village is established according to the usage and customary practice of the population of the area.

4. A Village Council shall consist of members, chosen by villagers in accordance with the prevailing customary practices and usages, the same being approved by the State Government, provided that hereditary village Chiefs GBs and Angs shall be ex- officio members of such Council and shall have voting right.

5. Qualification for members. - A person shall not be qualified to be chosen as a member of the Village Council unless he: -

(a) is a citizen of India, and

(b) has attained the age 25 years.

6. (a) Every Village Council, unless otherwise dissolved by the State Government, shall continue for five years from the date of appointment, provided that the said period may be extended by the State Government by a notification in the Gazette for a period not exceeding one year at a time.

(b) Ail members shall hold office during the life of the Village Council.

Provided that a member chosen to fill in a casual vacancy shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office of the member whom he replaced ;

Provided further that Village institutions width were traditionally established like the "Putu Mendcn" in Ao Area and recognised as Village Council shall continue to function as Village Council according to respective custom and usage.

7. Chairman. - (1) The Village Council will choose a member as Chairman of the Council.

(2) During the absence of the Chairman from any sitting of the Village Council a member of the Council nominated by the Chairman shall act as Chairman.

8. Secretary. - The Village Council may select and appoint a Secretary who may or may not be a member of the Council. If the Secretary is not a member of the Council, be shall have no voting rights.

9. Power to remove members. - (1) The State Government may remove any member of a Village Council from his office :

(a) Who is convicted of any offence involving moral turpitude by a court of law, or

(b) Who refuses to act, or become incapable of acting or

(c) Who is declared to be insolvent, or

(d) Who has been declared by notification in the Gazette to be disqualified for employment in the Public Service, or

(e) Who without an excuse or sufficient ground in the opinion of the State Government absents himself from the majority of meeting in a year of Village Council, or

(f) Who has been guilty of misconduct, in discharge of his duties or of any disgraceful conduct, and two third of the total members of the Village Council at a meeting recommend his removal.

(2) No person who has been removed from his office under clause (a) or clause (d) or sub-section (1) shah be eligible for re- election except with the previous permission of the State Government obtained by such person in the prescribed manner.

[(3) The State Government may remove any chairman of a village council from his office:

(a) if he ceases to be a member of the village council.

(b) if he resigns from chairmanship of the village council on his own volition by submitting a written resignation letter addressed to the Secretary of the village council, who shall forward it to the State Government through the Deputy Commissioner concerned.

(c) when a "no-confidence motion" is 'moved and passed by the majority of the village council members present and voting, in a special session for the purpose that may be summoned by the Deputy Commissioner, and to be presided by an administrative officer not below the rank of EAC, duly authorized in this behalf by the Deputy Commissioner of the district concerned.]

10. Conduct of Business. - The procedure for the conduct of business in a Village Council shall be as may be regulated from time to time by the Chairman thereof. The written record of the gist of its proceedings shall be maintained.

11. The Village Council shall meet once in every 3 months, provided that the Chairman may summon the meeting of the Council at any time if requisition is made by one-third of the members.

12. Powers and Duties. - The Village Council shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) to formulate Village Development Schemes, to supervise proper maintenance of water supply, roads, [power] forest, sanitation, education and other welfare activities :

(2) to help various Government agencies in carrying out development works in the Village.

(3) to take development works on its own initiative or on request by the Government.

(4) to borrow money from the Government, Banks or financial institutions for application in the development and welfare work of the Village and to repay the same with or without interest as the case may be.

(5) to apply for and receive grant-in-aid, donations, subsidies from the Government or any agencies.

(6) to provide security for due repayment of loan received by any permanent resident of the Villages from the Government, Bank or financial institution.

(7) to lend money from its funds to deserving permanent residents of the Village and to obtain repayment thereof with or without interest,

(8) to forfeit the security of the individual borrower on his default in repayment of loan, advanced to him or on his commission of a breach of any of the terms of loan agreement entered into by him with the Council and to dispose of such security by public auction or by private sale;

(9) to enter into any loan agreement with the Government Bank and financial institutions or a permanent resident of the Village.

(10) to realise registration fees for each litigation within its jurisdiction.

(11) to raise fund for utility service within the Village by passing a resolution subject to the approval of the Slate Government.

Provided that all monetary transactions shall be conducted through a scheduled Bank or the Nagaland Slate Co-operative Bank,

(12)' to constitute Village Development Board;

(13) power to do certain acts in the event of an epidemic.

13. On the outbreak of an epidemic or infectious disease Village Council shall initiate all preventive measures.

14. Deleted by Nagaland Act No. 6 of 1987 on 07.04.1987

15. Village Administration. - (1) The Village Council shall be auxiliary to the administration and shall have full powers lo deal with internal administration of the village.

(a) maintenance of law and order.

(b) in serious case offender may be arrested but such person should he handed over lo the nearest Administrative Officer or Police Station without undue delay.

(c) to report to the nearest Administrative Officer occurrence of any unnatural death or serious accident;

(d) to inform the presence of strangers, vagabonds or suspects to the nearest Administrative Officer or Police Station;

(e) to enforce orders passed by the competent authority on the village as a whole;

(f) to report outbreak of epidemics to the nearest Administrative Officer or Medical Officer;

(g) no transfer of immovable property shall be affected without the consent of the Village Council. Written record of this shall be maintained by the Village Council.

16. Disqualification. - A person shall be disqualified from being selected as and for being a member of Village Council : -

(1) If he is unsound mind and stands so declared by the competent court or such authority as may be recognized by the State Government ; or

(2) If he is not a citizen of India or has voluntarily acquired citizenship of foreign nation or is under acknowledgement or allegiance to a foreign nation; or

(3) if he has been convicted by a court in India for an offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years unless a period of five years or such less period as the State Government may allow in any particular case, has elapsed since his release; or

(4) if having held an office under any Council he has been found guilty of corruption, disloyalty or breach of such Council laws, unless a period of five years or such less period as the State Government may determine in any particular case has elapsed since his becoming so dis-qualified ; or

(5) if he is an undischarged insolvent; or

(6) if he is a salaried Government servant or employee of an Area Council ; or

(7) if he abstains himself from the majority of the meeting in a year and is unable to explain such absence to the satisfaction of the Council; or

(8) if he is a member of any other Village Council; or

(9) if he has been dismissed from the service of the Government or any other local authority for misconduct, unless a period of five years has elaspsed from the date of dismissal.

17. If any question arises as to whether a member of Village Council has been subject to disqualification, the question shall be referred to the decision of the State Government whose decision thereon shall be final.

18. A seat shall become vacant (1) when a member dies; or (2) when a member resigns his seal in writing under his own hand or (3) when a member is removed by the State Government on becoming disqualified.

19. Filling of Casual Vacancy. - When a seat becomes vacant, the Chairman shall call upon the Village concerned to choose a member.

20. When a dispute arises as to the selection of any member of a Village Council, the matter shall be referred to the State Government whose decision thereon shall be final.

21. Every Village Council shall be a body, corporate by the name of the Village for which it is constituted and shall have perpetual succession and a common seal, and shall by the said name use and be used through its Chairman, with power to acquire hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable and to contract and do all other things necessary for the purposes of this Act.

22. Control of Village Council. - Subject to the General superintendence of the State Government/the Deputy Commissioner/the Additional Deputy Com¬missioner or Sub-divisonal Officer (Civil) in-charge of the Sub-Division, Extra Assistant Commissioner or Circle Officer shall have control over all the Village Councils within his jurisdiction."

List of Conferences:

Paper titled "Defeminization of the labour force: a case of Nagaland" has been accepted and presented in the 62nd Annual ISLE Conference, IIT, Roorkee, Uttarakhand.

Paper titled "A Comparison Study on Quality of Education of Government and Private Schools in Nagaland" has been accepted and presented in National E-Conference on Education and Development: Post Covid-19, Lovely Professional University, Punjab.

Paper titled "How Insta is Instagram for Women Entrepreneurs? A case of India" has been accepted and presented for Poster Presentation at the 21st Science Council of Asia Conference. (ICSSR).

Paper titled "An Academic Analysis of Quality Education in India. A Comparative study of Public and Private Schools in Nagaland." has been accepted and presented on 1st April at International Conference on Inter-disciplinary Innovative Research and Studies'. Goa

Participated in 1st International Conference on challenges in Higher Education for the Underprivileged- A Global perspective organized by the SC-ST Cell and Nodal office, Anna University from April 12-14th 2023.

List of Workshops:

Participated in Online short-term course, "National Workshop on Statistical Analysis using SPSS" held on 26th -30th May, 2020, organized by Human Resource Development Center, Lovely Professional University.

Attended a National E- Seminar on "Revival of Indian economy after Covid - 19" held on 7th June, organized by Department of Humanities, Acropolis Institute of Management studies& research, Indore.

Attended a one-week National Level Workshop on Data Analysis using R Programming from 15th-21st March 2022 by Bala's V V Academy, Chennai.

Attending a workshop on NSSO Unit Level Data Extraction and Analysis using SAS, Oct 31st to 8th Nov organized by Human Resource Development Center and Mittal School of Business. Lovely Professional University. Punjab.

Attended a workshop on Data Analysis using SPSS for Social Sciences on Aug 21 – Aug 30 organized by Human Resource Development Center and Mittal School of Business, Lovely Professional University. Punjab.

Participated in the 7-day Professional Development programme on "Methods of Data Collection and Analysis Through SPSS & Using AI Technology for Research Writing organized by Patrician college of Arts & Science College from 18th March to 26th March 2024.