Socio-cultural Hindrances faced by Women of Nagaland with Special Reference to Depiction in the Mainstream Media

1Esther Zhimo
M.A.-Political Science (Semester-IV)
Department of Political Science
Lovely Professional University, Punjab
Registration Number -11814465

2Rahul Sethi
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Lovely Professional University, Punjab
rahul.24353@lpu.co.in

Abstract:
Early ethnographic materials substantiate the fact that the status of women has been underestimated, through the recorded history it is evident that women’s role are primarily family oriented, their activities are mostly confined within family. Gradually there is notable change in the role of the women in the society. However despite the change, position of Naga women are still facing socio-cultural hindrance and discrimination. This paper is an attempt to discuss the stereotypical depiction of Naga women in mainstream media.

Keywords: women empowerment, rights, social media, customary, traditions.

Introduction:
There are more than ten lakh of population of women living in Nagaland and many more are all over the states. No tribe, whether a recognized scheduled or not, is superior to other, nor is any gender whether male or female, is superior or more important than the other. Every state has its own unique social and cultural values. The Naga society is one of the oldest tribal society of the world and it comprises of various tribes and sub-tribe who originally belong to Indo-Mongoloid race. The Naga society has a prolong history of their own pertaining to their origin, migration, confrontation, internecine war-fare and also their ancient political, social and cultural values and practices. Naga society has its own social and cultural traditions and each of those customs traditions and cultural values play an important significance in the society. Nagaland being a part of Indian subcontinent are entitled to the rights like all other citizens without any distinction between male and female, but irrespective of that it is sometimes not visible in Nagaland. Yes, there are women rights and they are honored but the whole cultural and social values has now become a hindrance to the women of Nagaland. Women are deprived of their right, theoretically the Naga women have almost the same rights
and duties as men. However, they are not ordinarily allowed to participate in politics, decision making and also some religious function. Media today plays an important role “the Reel life is actually a reflection of real life”. This study will highlight the socio-cultural hindrance faced by Naga Women as depicted in various media. The study will be guided by following research questions.

1. What are the socio-cultural issues and challenges faced by Naga women in the family and society?
2. Why are Naga women are depicted weaker in main stream media?
3. How can mainstream media help in the cause of empowerment of Naga women?

This paper chiefly discuss about the women empowerment. It will help us to understand the status of women of Nagaland in every sphere. The study assess the situation of Naga women and wants to know whether there are biases or prejudices against women. The struggle that Naga women suffers, it will help to come to a solution as how to bring improvement in the Naga society. This paper explain the how the different socio-cultural values and practices hinders the rights of women of Nagaland. The main scope of the paper is to focus on the clear understanding of the Naga women, its socio-cultural hindrances, also depiction of women in social media which in itself projects so much about the status of women in Nagaland. Thus this research will helps us to empower women and fight back the problems faced by women not only by Naga women but women in general, by understanding the roots of the problems which comes from own customs and tradition.

There are so many socio-cultural hindrance faced by women and Naga women in particular which has not been widely discussed. Women rights and empowerment is a necessity for every aspects of the society, only acknowledging the participation of men in the society cannot bring development in the society. If women are deprived of their rights, it certainly has deeper repercussions like the whole society is on the verge of ruin. The conservatism and the old age traditions often oppose equality especially in the state of Nagaland with more men in power, gender equality was quite an issue in the past, though women were given some privileges. However, still many situation and hindrances has arises in Nagaland. These conflicts have led to many problems.

Feminism in Nagaland
The glory of Naga society is at crossroads, the kind of justice and freedom that the people are being given decides their fate. On one side it includes the poor who speak the language of Naga individuals, on the other it includes the rich and their network of family and friends and one that see people through the prism of class, ethnicity and entitlement. Second, it is important to understand that the tribal laws needed to be seen from the prism of feminism and justice.

“The feminist consciousness is at a nascent stage in Naga society; isolated voices of women empowerment are located within very conservative social mores. So much so that talks of women’s political empowerment is at best treat as a joke and at worst challenging the traditional norms “Jamir famous sociologist says (Jamir, 2019).

He further says that apex male organization would not hesitate to ban the women’s body including the feminist group if they are seen acting or going against the established norms and traditions. The society of Nagaland is still traditional in their socio-cultural practice and it has becomes a hindrance because women are treated as weaker than men. Naga women need
to develop a strong idea of empowerment, Naga feminism is not just there for the demand of equal rights, and there are lots of political and economic of drawback in Nagaland. All these studies on feminism and its less existence shows that women are given less importance by society and family in political social and cultural life.

**Current Status of Women in Nagaland**
Status of women in Nagaland has changed over the past few millenniums. There are more educated women in Nagaland as compared it olden days, more women are taking part in the business field, also in politics. However, there is other side where women are expected to live and present themselves in certain ways though women are allowed to take part in politics they are not fully part of the decision making bodies. Women reservation was made by government for women representation. Men along with some stereotypical citizen oppose the reservation a lot of issue occurred, many people died. Even today customary laws and traditions are maintained, without trying to go away with the evil traditional that bring inequality among people. Thus, this is the current status of Naga women. The Naga society is a patriarchy society, it give more power to male to dominate women. There are so many untold domestic violence in Naga family where women are brutally harassed by husband. Women in Nagaland struggle a lot to develop her personality as there are lots of social hindrance. One such example is shown in the social media video “videoobscenetindia’u-tube where women’s speak about the changes and discrimination that they still face in family and work place. There are lots of do and don’t when regards to women. So far only one women in last 54 years is elected in state assembly also Naga women are not allowed to participate in traditional village council, they also have no land, property and inheritance rights by tradition which is still practiced in some family.

**Depiction of Naga Women in Mainstream Media**
Media has become a general public voice of the people, women today have emerged as a consumer of mass entertainment many misuse women for mass media publicity. The status and depiction of Naga women is low and has less positive due to factor such as illiteracy, inaccessibility, lack of economic power, traditional restriction that prohibits them from many things. Cinema, dramas and film depicts the life of Naga women such as ‘Between the silences’ short movie ‘According to survey women’s issues are found to be less in newspaper and magazines. Specifically the Nagaland own newspaper Nagaland post, Morung etc. Publishes only when its viral Social media platform such as face book, instagram, twitter, snap chat, whatsapp are fastest means of communication. We can see from there, how many Naga women are scared to open up themselves like the western world because of socio-cultural barrier. Northeast states are kept separated from the mainland India and also from the mainstream media. Which give opportunity to small media communication to misuse the various news including depiction of Naga women in various social platforms.

**Conclusion**
No doubt Naga women in general are often known and depicted as educated hardworking and independent. Naga society despite of its lots of criticism has been praised for ensuring
women's safety. As reported Nagaland has low rate of crime against women. Nagaland is a land with lots of respectable culture and traditions among which women respect and security is utmost importance. No doubt, traditional law of Naga society clearly discriminate gender role and gender responsibility. Government along with various women organization are trying to bring some change towards women status and depiction. However, the status of women will remain low unless there is improvement in factor such as literacy, lack of economic power, traditional restriction etc. task of the government and women organization has become more challenging and difficult. Media as an influencer in today’s world with wider audiences should play an important role in improving the status of women, it should portray women strong and powerful as media reinforces gender and social justice in the society by awareness and educating the society. Thus we can be seen that mainstream media has great implication in the society it can either break it or make it. Women should use the platform to empower themselves and reach their voice throughout the world.

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