

**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE IN TANGKHUL NAGA VILLAGES, UKHRUL  
DISTRICT, MANIPUR**

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**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL LOCAL  
GOVERNANCE IN TANGKHUL NAGA VILLAGES, UKHRUL  
DISTRICT, MANIPUR**

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*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy in Social Work Mizoram University, Aizawl*

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## **CHAPTER III**

## **METHODOLOGY**

## **CHAPTER IV**

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

## **CHAPTER V**

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

## **APPENDICES**



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**Declaration**

I, R. Yaongam, do hereby make this declaration that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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**Certificate**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CBOs	:	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	:	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CVCs	:	Customary Village Councils
DAs	:	Districts Administrators
FGDs	:	Focus Group Discussions
FWPR	:	Female Workforce Participation Rate
ICRW	:	International center for Research on Women
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
KIIs	:	Key Informant Interviews
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NREGs	:	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
PRIs	:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RDCs	:	Rural District councils
SDGs	:	Sustainable Development Goals
TLC	:	Traditional Local Council
TLG	:	Traditional Local Governance
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Program

## Women's Participation in Traditional Local Governance in Tangkhul Naga Villages, Ukhrul District, Manipur

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### *Interview Schedule*

*(Confidential and research purpose only)*

### Section I

**(Demographic, socio-economic profile)**

Schedule no. :                      Village:

(i). *Kindly furnish the details*

a	Name:	
b	Age :	
c	Ethnicity :	
d	Tribe:	
e	Clan:	
f	Religion:	
g	Denomination:	
h	Educational status:	
i	Occupation:	
j	Marital status:	
k	Head of the household:	
l	Type of family :	
m	Size of family:	
n	Husband's age:	
o	Husband's education:	
p	husband's occupation:	
q	Annual income/economic category:	

### Section II

*(Traditional Local Governance)*

(a). General structure

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Village council profile</i>		<i>Known</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
i	Number of members of Village Council/Village Authority	10		
ii	Duration of office of the Village Council/Village Authority	3 yrs		
iii	Head of the Village Council/Village Authority	Chairman		
iv	Mode of selection of the Village Chair-	Elected		

	man/Headman/secretary			
v	Mode of selection of village council members	Nominated		

(b). Composition

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Clan</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
i.	Mark P	Chairman		Shimray		
ii.	Titus	Secretary		Horam		
iii.	Khungsan	Mantri		Shimray		
iv.	Yiwung	Members		Horam		
v.	Nganaomi	Member		Shimray		
vi.	Chihangam	Member		Shimray		
vii.	Ditimus	Member		Shimray		
viii.	Yarchung	Member		Horam		
ix.	Ninglum	Member		Shimray		
x.	Shinmi	Member		Horam		

(c). Functions

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Awareness on the functions of village council</i>	<i>Known</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
I	Maintaining Customarily law: rules and regulation		
ii	Tackling issues and problems		
iii	Festivals		
iv	Settlement		
v	Resource development management		
vi	Economic development and social justice.		
vii	Educational affairs		

### Section III

*(Nature and extent of women's participation in the traditional local governance)*

Sl.No	Modes of women's participation	N	SD	S	A	SA
i	Women don't participate in village assembly decision making.					
ii	Women don't participate in clans meeting					
iii	Women have no voting rights					
iv	Women can raise their opinion through women's organization and get the agenda's approval from the village assembly.					
v	Women convey their opinion through their husband.					
vi	Husband and wife discuss important village affairs before any decisions are being arrived.					
vii	Women do highly influence their husband in village decision making					
viii	Women can participate in village assembly or decision					

	making					
ix	Customarily women are not allowed to represent in village council					

#### Section IV

##### *(Perception on the participation in traditional local governance)*

(a). Women's perception

Sl.No		N	SD	S	A	SA
i	Traditional Local Council represents only the interest of the male section of the village					
ii	System of selection needs to be changed to foster women's participation in local governance					
iii	Number of seats are necessary to be reserved for women in village council					
iv	System of traditional local governance favors only men					
v	Women do not have the capacity/ability to be in village council.					
vi	Women's active participation in the traditional local governance/village council is important					
vii	Women's active participation in the TLG is not important as their husbands represent them					
viii	Men are more capable to be in village council					
ix	Women should also be given voting rights					
x	Women need to participate in village assembly and clans decision making meeting					
xi	Women will not be able to handle the village affairs					

#### Section V

##### *(Constraints to women's participation in the traditional local governance)*

(a). Constraining factors

Sl.No		N	SD	S	A	SA
i	Family members don't encourage women to participate in governance					
iii	Husband/male don't encourage women to participate in governance					
iv	Customarily women are not allowed to participate in governance					
v	Lack of confidence amongst women					
vi	Lack of education, knowledge, skills, etc.					
vii	Mobility, heavy traditional responsibilities					
viii	Perception of, response to women					

ix	Patriarchal structures/male dominance tradition					
x	Preconceived inferiority mindset amongst women					

(b). List down the constraining factors according to your opinion

### Section VI

(a). State your opinion/View on women's participation in traditional local governance/village council. (If you think it is important or not, state the reason why it is so?)

(b). What will be your response to, if you are proposed to becoming a member of the village council?

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The present study seeks to explore the status quo of women's participation and representation in traditional local governance. Attempt has been made to highlight the existing traditional system of governance. It delved into the nature and extent of rural women's engagement in decision making process. The study thus, contributed to the enhancement of the existing gender related knowledge and accentuated the prevalent women's perceptions and attitudes towards their participation and the governance system practices amongst the Nagas in general and the Tangkhul community of Ukhrul district in particular. Having kept the traditional system at base in tandem with the contemporary scenario of gender equality and equal participation in governance this study looked into the various constraining factors and challenges faced by women towards active participation in traditional village council. The findings of this study could contribute to the development of gender sensitive strategies and measures that would increase women's participation and accountability in local governance without compromising the long standing customary system of governance of the Tangkhul Naga of Manipur.

The development of a society or a nation depends on the how its available resources are utilized to the maximum outputs. The most powerful and valuable resources of a society or a nation is its human resource. Any societies which can transform its maximum population into human resource run at the higher developmental path. However the issue lies within the imbalance utilization of maximum population as human resource. Albeit, women compose half or more of the nation's total population, their opportunities and roles in contributing towards national development are often deprived. Therefore, the concept like women empowerment and development and women emancipation thus emerged (Kalita & Baruah, 2015).

In the yester era society expected and assigned women to secondary role; a daughter, sister, mother, daughter-in-law, good housewife, home maker, submissive and obedient child bearer, servant or maid, etc. Women were shunned from socio- political realm of the nation. They were not welcomed and subjected to all sort of exploitations;

economically, socially and politically and total exclusion from the governance. In this present generation we often speak of the achievements made nationally as whereas internationally. Mention can be made of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Constitution of India- The preamble, the Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, the 73<sup>rd</sup>, 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment and several other provisions instrumental for tackling issues related to women. Nevertheless, the condition of women around the world in general and India in particular still stands below desirable atmosphere. In the one claim modern industrialized society, still stands a high toll upon discrimination, subjugation, exploitation, marginalization, etc. of women in different forms. One might view human society in general from the gender telescopic lenses or sex roles defined social microscopic lenses. What might be shocked to observe in the societal laboratory could be the fact that women are oppressed, subjugated, discriminated, alienated, exploited, marginalized, etc in the society on the basis of sex, gender or races virus that infested the sanctity of equality, respect, recognition and protection. John Stuart Mill (as cited in Kumari, 2006) cogently adjudicated about it when he said that the progress of a country can be judged by its socio-economic condition and political status of women, as women occupy important places in the family in particular and society in general.

The concept of women's participation in governance is not of recent modern origin. Plato, Socrates the world renowned Greek philosophers, in *The Republic* stated as "part of the natural relation of the sexes" during the fourth century BC. Plato concluded that no any class, neither ethnicity nor gender must determined intelligence and ethics that the same must adhere to every one without any restrictions or limited to any particular group. History around the world witnessed mankind's arduous endeavor for a better world. Mention can be made amongst many The French revolution and several movements and revolutions that addressed the issues of liberty, equality, freedom from the colonial domination, abolition of slavery, emancipation of working class, etc. However, on the other hand such movements and revolutions least concerned about the voice of women and neglected their issues and quest for ameliorating women's condition in the society. Two years prior to The French Revolution, a proposal for women to be granted legal rights and opportunity for election to governing bodies was raised by Condorcet who authored the '*progress of the Human Mind*'. Later, during The French Revolution in 1789, a self educated daughter of butcher named Olympe de



Gouges initiated a move inclusive of women from all classes and ranks. They resolutely endorsed an agenda known as women's reform agenda to the national assembly in October 1789. She refuted that principle of natural equality was underrated in the French Declaration on the Rights of Man on the basis of gender and race. Her audacity on the issues of women rights and women's political association could but outlawed by the then French ostensibly democratic Committee on public Security. She was beheaded in the year 1793. Another significant account was the work of Mary Wollstonecraft on women's rights when she published her book titled "*Vindication of the Rights of Women*" in 1792, which sent a great shock all over the world, inked in the history of the emergence of feminism movement (Kumari, 2006. pp. 1-26, 172-178).

However, not until 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the phenomena of women's struggle across the globe took a drastic turn. The least concern political condition of women drew the attention of scholars that opened the eyes of law makers and blind public. Women's participation in governance was predominantly deliberated since the first wave of feminist movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Different feminist schools of thought attempt to explain the nature of subordination and suppression of women. Women emancipation movement gained attention from many scholars and activists around the world. Ray & Ray accounted about the two different models of revolution in his article "*Women Emancipation: A policy Perspective*" which sheds light upon the different situations of women in society. The first kind of revolutionary model is named as 'Patriarchal model of revolution (women-in-family model)' and the second model which is known as 'women emancipation' through revolutionize the relation of production. The first model excludes women from definition and construction of liberation and liberty which relegates them as second class citizen. The French revolution, Mexican and the Iranian revolution fall under the first model of revolution whereas, that of the Bolshevik revolution and some other third world revolution fall in the second model. The second model says that emancipation of women is an essential part of the revolution to bring social transformation, for political and social purposes women should be included as an important citizen and productive forces which need to be mobilized (2008). John Rawls concept of "Justice as Fairness" and "the wave of participatory democracy" (Chakrabarty et. al, 2004) have impacted tremendously in the political notion of democracy that undergone a paradigm shift. Attempts were made around the world to recognize the weaker and

marginalized sections including women in a society. Forbes (1998) commented that such attempt to empower women was made more pragmatic when UN declared International year of women in 1975.

The United Nations Organization plays critical roles to promote and to uplift the holistic condition of women. With reference to the women's participation in governance the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 2011 says that "Women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women". Moreover, several conventions and commitments for the promotion of women's participation have been adopted such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing platform for Action 1995.

The UN (2015) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also stressed on the equality and development in all the aspects of life without any discrimination. Some of the important points are highlighted as follows:

*"Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*

*5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.*

*5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels*

*Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries*

*10.2 ...empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status*

*Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*

*16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels"*

In the cycle of developmental wave of women empowerment around the world, India had to wake from its long slumber indifference gesture towards women's issues. The Constitution of India guarantees all citizen equality in all the spheres of social, economic,

political, etc. life. Albeit unfortunately the patriarchal ridden societal systems makes women difficult to enjoy the rights as men do. Special measures must be taken to empower and uplift the condition and status of women in India. The year of 1990s brought about changes and development drastically in many aspects for the nation. Mention can be made one amongst many of those, the Constitutional Amendment of 1992 which is also known as the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional (Amendment) Act dawn a new ray of hope for women in politics (Chakrabarty et.al, 2004; Nandita, 2013). Under this provision one-third of the seats in municipality should be reserved exclusively for women. The creation of Panchayati Raj Institution or rather can be termed as decentralization of power provides several opportunities for women's participation in governance.

Despite the Acts and provisions little improvement could be seen of the participation of women in governance. Across time and again the invaluable contribution of women in a society is noted but generally they are relegated as second citizen and coupled by traditional attitudes as home makers. Jharta observed rightly that *"in traditional India, political authority was a hereditary right and most sections of the society had no access to political activities and political power. As a result, they were apolitical due to lack of political education and experience"* (1996.p. 13).

Gupta has the opinion that the limited women's participation in India is highly attributed to various social, economic, and political variables. She further extrapolated that severe limitation of women's political participation is 'due to a nexus of traditional factors. The parochial onus of patriarchal essence which favors men folks, that the women folks are inadvertently or advertently push at the margin in the process of governance. In contrary to structured relation to decision making and participation of women, significant incident can be accounted where women participation were enormous. Mass participation of women during civil disobedience movement in 1930 and the Quit India Movement in 1942, moreover the peculiar Chipko Movement in 1972-74 were recognized. Despite the significant credibility of women's initiative in the political process of informal settings, their presence in the structured decision-making institutional settings is not felt or nominal otherwise. "Pattern of political behaviour from different regions show different relationships, influenced as they are by inter-linked factors like the social status of women, their economic position, the cultural norms, and

above all the region outlook towards women's participation in the wider society" (2000,pp.55-58.).

Around the world there has been an increasing interest in bringing holistic development. Many countries stress on structural change, that no longer favor centralized form of governance. Thus, tremendous emphasize is made on decentralization by passing legislation to develop overall inclusive form of governance. It is not just changing the structures in order to build good political institutions rather the whole concept of decentralization includes strengthening local governance that can enhance the level of meaningful participation of the local population in the process of decision making to ensure transparency, accountability that will accelerate effective and responsive implementation of policies (Lutz & Linder, 2004).

The north eastern region constitutes about 8% of India's size with approximately 40 million of the total population of India (Census 2011). It is a home for tribal as being one of the highest regions of concentration of tribal. This region is marked as one of the conflict infested areas of the country. Every tribe is very protective and conscious about their culture and identity that ramify through exercise of their autonomy having authority over their lives. Historically, since the British era any form of activities that would sense as an encroachment over their rights was sternly revolted. Therefore, in order to pacify the situation and to enable them to live in their own way the British treated them with different administrative parameters. Tribal areas were classified as "excluded" and "Partially Excluded" under the Government of India Act 1935. However, the Act of 1935 did not grant local self governance political autonomy. After the independence in 1952 this was replaced by what is known as sixth schedule with the intention to provide protection of tribal areas and interest by allowing local self governance through constitutional institutions at district or regional level. These institutions are responsible for protecting tribal culture and customs and to carry out developmental tasks.

The Naga polity in tradition or system of local governance can be of two types viz. republic and monarchy forms of government (Nshoga,2009).The Tangkhul Naga customarily follows monarchical system of governance by adopting the principle of democracy. Every village is independent in the affairs of governance. The Tangkhul village is governed under the leadership of a chief along with the council of elder (Hangva). The headman or

chieftainship is hereditary but not autocrat in nature. Theoretically the head of the clan was the permanent member of the village council however, in practice someone will be nominated from each clan but depending on the size of the clan the number of representative will be decided to be member of the council. The village council comprises of the representative from each clan (Nshoga, 2009.pp.120-125; Shimray, 2001.pp159-163; Shimray, 2000.p.61; Ruivah, 1993.p.149). Vitso (2003) argued that women in Naga society are highly influenced by the customary way of practices. Undeniably in certain aspects women are granted invariably high social status and occupy significant social position. They play inimitable roles and responsibility unlike in other parts of the Indian society (Shimray, 2001; Horam, 1988; Zimik, 2014). But in contrary to the high social status of the Tangkhul women their participation in the village council is still invisible till today. Zimik (2014) argued that the Tangkhul women in present context unlike in the past are educated and can earn to support themselves. However, they are relegated as second citizens with no preference given to them in the aspect of local council. The traditional attitudes greatly influence to grant a space for them in local governance.

## **1.1 Overview of Literature**

The existing literature accentuated increasing attention on women and governance from researchers and policy makers as a “highly significant issues on grounds of both equity and improving the performance of governance” (Minoletti, 2014). Several studies on women and governance are found in global, national and local contexts.

### **1.1.1 Global context**

Voluminous study relating to women and governance dominated significant space in the world of research based literature. *Women’s participation and representation in governance* was examined by many researchers from various perspectives in different countries (Kurebwa, 2014; Panday & Li, 2014; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009; Mobido, 1995; Pandey,1990)

The studies in regards to women’s political participation: the constraining factors and enabling factors to women’s participation have been conducted to understand the factors that affect women’s participation in politics (Adesanya (2014); Minoletti, 2014; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Wang & Dai, 2013; True et. al, 2012; (Pape, 2008); Howell, 2006; Weinberger & Jutting, 2001; Conway, 2001; Skalnes et. al, n.d.)

Another studies in relating to the present research context is on the attitude and perception of people towards gender roles and women's participation in governance (Alim, 2009; Bowen, Wu, Hwang, & Scherer, 2007)

The issues on women's empowerment and their participation in governance in the globalised context were also discussed in different studies (Rezazadeh, 2011; Gray, Kittilson, & Sandholtz, 2006; Fernando, 1997)

### **1.1.2 National context**

Many literatures have been evidently indicated the numerous researches work in India that concern about women and governance. Such studies included "*The power of political voice: Women's political representation and Crime in India*" (Iyer et. al, 2012), in their attempt substantial relationship between the documented crimes against women and Women's political representation in the governance have been noted. More reported crimes against women were documented since the introduction of quotas system in the governance for disadvantaged groups that mandate political representation; this changed which the authors argued as good news for women's empowerment. Political representation provided room for disadvantaged groups raise their voice ( Iyer et. al, 2012).

"*Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India*" is an experimental study conducted at 265 village councils in west Bengal and Rajasthan. In these villages one third of the village council head is being reserved for a woman; meaning only women could be elected to the position of village head in the reserved council. The researchers compared the types of public good provided in the reserved and unreserved village councils. The result revealed the relationship between the public goods provided with the reservation of the council seat; that the types of investment made on the basis of their own gender needs (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004).

"*Opportunities and Challenges of women's political participation in India: A synthesis of research findings from select district of India*", this research was undertaken under the UN Women's Programme titled 'Promoting Women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia' conducted by International center for Research on Women (ICRW). It focused on the grassroot level of the three UN Women's programme districts; Alwar district of Rajasthan, Mysore district of Karnataka and Gajapat district of Odisha. The main objective of this research was to understand where Panchayati Raj

Institution (PRIs) acted as gender responsive institutions, where issues related to gender were raised and discussed. It examined the factors influencing on the deliberation of gender issues with special focused on domestic violence. The study finding was based on information collected through survey of around 3000 Gram Panchayat members inclusive of men and women and quantitative data was collected from Sarpanches, member of Panchayat samiti and Zilla parishad supplemented by other stakeholder in three selected districts (UN, n.d.).

A study on the “*Dynamics of Local Governance in Karnataka*” was conducted to have an empirical accentuation on the coming of Panchayati raj institutions in consideration with the Informal local governance. With the introduction of Panchayati raj Institutions people often ignore the significant role played by other informal local institutions like caste panchayats, street panchayats and customary village councils. The author once again brought the importance implication made by these customary village councils (CVCs) into limelight and opined that these institutions have not been marginalized by the formal elected bodies. On contrary the author found out that CVCs actively continue to function and have strong interactive relations with the formal institutions influencing in a positive as well as negative way (Ananthpur, 2007).

Authors like (Nandita, 2013; Kaul & Sahni, 2009; Chakrabarty et. al, 2004; Bhan & Raj, 2001; Roy, 1999; Forbes, 1998) examined the participation of women in decision making process from different perspectives.

Several attempts have been made on the issue of Empowerment of women through political participation in india (Singh, 2015; Pankaj and Tankha, 2010)

### **1.1.3 Regional or Local context**

Many research based studies have been done on the issues of women and the customary practices; its implication on the life of women, status of women and their roles, etc.

“*Customary Inheritance practices and women amongst the Kabui Naga of Manipur*” in this study Kamei attempted to explore the customary land-inheritance system from the gender perspective to highlight the situation of women under this institutional set up (2011).

A study on “*Social Status and the role of Naga Women in the Traditional Naga Society*” was conducted in attempt to explore the traditional practices of the Tangkhul women in the past and tried to give meaning in the present society by examining their status and roles.

The author highlighted that women occupy significant position by enjoying specific rights and obligations, however in respect to administration and decision making process no women are allowed to participate unless in the form of indirect participation by influencing their husband or brother or son (*zimik, 2015*).

The same author in her other study titled “*Naga women as peace Maker In war and Conflict Situation (Yesterday And Today)*” further attempted to examine the inimitable responsibility taken by Naga women in times of war and conflicts. She highlighted certain special power exercised by women in time of conflicts. Such prerogative power which never could be found amongst men was given to Naga women that they act as peace makers (*zimik, 2014*).

*Vitso (2003)* in her study titled “*Customary Law and Women: The Chakhesang Nagas*”, revealed that women are considered weaker and subordinate to men. The customary law highly influenced upon the status of women. Yet comparatively women do enjoy certain substantial position in the society.

The author of “*Gender Relations and the web of Traditions in North east India*” aimed to deal with gender relation within the perspective of Traditional, custom and practices (*Buongpui, 2013*).

Attempt were being made to examine the north eastern regions’ status of women in a comparative manner with the rest of India average in the study Titled “*Status of Women: north Eastern Region of India versus India*” (*Das, 2013*).

Several studies from different perspective towards women empowerment and women’s participation in governance have been attempted to highlight the condition of women and to promote overall development in regards to women in northeast India (*Lalchatuanthangi, 2016; Bhattacharya & Roy, 2015; Das, 2015; Kalita & Baruah, 2015; Lalneihzovi, 2012*)

## **1.2 Research gap**

Internationally and nationally women in governance has been a contemporary concern and addressed by different mechanisms. The lack of women’s participation in the decision making process have been questioned to improve and promote the status of women. In spite of the fact, the initiatives mainly focus on the political participation of women and countable



attempt have been made to explain on why women are neglected in decision making process and representation in the local governance.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

In spite of women having high social status and enormous roles and responsibilities played by women in the Tangkhul society no space is provided in the traditional local governance. The absence of women's participation in the local governance have been highlighted and questioned continuously by many scholars but no such empirical explanation is given to the inquiry as to why women are neglected and virtually refrained from participation in the local governance. The determinant factors and perceptions related to women's participation in governance have never been examined. However, the general public has been speculating that the deceptive mentality ought to be the sabotage issue for the promotion of gender responsive governance. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the constraining factors to women's participation, related perceptions and attitudes of women relating to participation and representation in the local governance. Finally, it is important to probe the possible measures that will enable women's participation in the local governance without compromising the long standing customary system of governance of the Tangkhul Naga of Manipur.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What is the existing condition of women in the Tangkhul traditional local governance?
2. How the traditional cultural practices do acts as challenges, constraints and opportunities for women's participation in the local governance?
3. What are the existing related perceptions amongst the women towards their participation in the local governance?
4. What form of decision making process or governance is influential for women's participation?

### **1.5 Objectives**

1. To understand the traditional local governance system among the Tangkhuls in rural Ukhrul, Manipur.
2. To probe into the nature and extent of the Tangkhul women's participation in the traditional local governance.
3. To understand the perceptions of the Tangkhul women on their participation in the traditional local governance.
4. To understand the constraints to women's participation in the traditional local governance.
5. To suggest measures for social work intervention towards promotion of women's participation and gender responsive traditional local governance.

### **1.6 Chapter Scheme**

Chapter: I	: Introduction
Chapter: II	: Review of Literature
Chapter: III	: Methodology
Chapter: IV	: Results and Discussion
Chapter: V	: Conclusion and Suggestions

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter devoted to the scheme of literatures in relevance to the present study. Reviewing of literature helps to understand more about the concepts and the context of the study. In regards to this chapter, attempts are being made to establish the linkages with other relevant studies. It aims at laying a foundation for this study that the research context should be in connection with the previous studies and analysis of the related ideas (Oliver, 2008). It is divided into three main sections.

#### **2.1 Perspectives on the Concept of Participation/Political Participation**

Theis (2007) in the study on “*Performance, Responsibility and Political Decision-Making: Child and Youth participation in Southeast Asia, East Asia and the Pacific*”, observed that the economic situation of a locality, the political system, social relationships, gender relations and attitudes towards children and youth and the nature of the education system are some of the significant factors that shape the context for child and youth participation. The Author conceptualized the term participation based on three main dimensions:

1. Participation as performance and responsibility
2. Participation as a right
3. Participation as democratic citizenship

Kumari stated the opinion of Nie and Verba, Milbrath and Goel in her work. She viewed ‘participation’ as an organized effort of groups or individuals in a given social situation to enhance control over resources and management of institutions. In other words it is a voluntary effort of an individuals or groups in contributing for the progress of programs and overall national development. Thus, in general political participation was stated as those members’ voluntary activities in a society contributing to formulation of public policy and selection of leaders or rulers (2006. Chapter 3).

Rowe and Frewer (2004) critically examined the meaning of Public Participation/Participation and raised germane issues as to why it is considered as the improvement on the traditional ways of decision making. Moreover their fervent attempt collided with the complex nature in defining ‘participation’. Its conceptual dimensions, scope

and mechanisms should be used to be participative, to what extent must be measured to be considered participative, etc. such characteristics left no definition easier. Their opinion was similar to Arnstien, Nelkin and Pollak, Wiedemann and Femers (as cited in Rowe & Frewer, 2004. P. 514) that no public involvement is participation as to be participative can be in different ways and at different levels. Thus, to be defined what precisely is participation induces debate. In their study Rowe and Frewer viewed public participation/participation at a general level “*as the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development*” (2004).

Wienberger (as cited in Wienberger & Jutting, 2001, p.1394) described participation as a process of involvement having different stages which are induced by the environment: cultural and social framework and the personal factor: interest and information searching behavior, attitude towards political and social behavior and perception of power relations.

Kuhn (1998) stated that the subject of People’s participation in politics or participation in developmental activities has drawn a considerable attention in the international discourse of development and progress. The ‘participation’ of the ‘local population’ in the developmental activities significantly ensures efficiency and sustainability of any developmental programs. It supposedly enables peoples’ self reliant capacities, accountability, transparency and democratization of the governance system. Various ‘institutions and organizations of different size, nature and character all over the world such as world bank, UN developmental organizations, the European commission, national government agencies, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions’ emphasize greatly on the issue of participation. Kuhn highlighted the need to analyze the meaning and concept of participation. In his study focused on ‘participation in development activities’, whereby treated not ‘participation in politics (or ‘democratic participation’) and participation in development’ as two distinct forms or concepts. “*Participation is associated with empowerment, because individuals and social groups require the abilities to assert themselves and to gain negotiating powers, in particular underprivileged groups*”. He further attempted to explicate the term in broader political sense as the term ‘participatory development’ which is not only a concept rather an ideal state-of-affairs. It denotes to a democratization process in societies, respect for human rights and good governance. Kuhn

defined participatory development as “*the partaking of a maximum of concerned social and political actors in identifying, designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development activities including control and decision-making over the allocation of financial resources*” (1998, p. 11). Moreover, he asserted that the terms ‘people’s participation’ and ‘popular participation’ must not use interchangeably.

Prem N.Sharma and Mohan P.Wagley (as cited in Kuhn, 1998, p.12) defined “*People’s participation is viewed as a dynamic group process in which all members of a group contribute to the attainment of common objectives, share the benefits accruing from group activities, exchange information and experience of common interest, and follow the rules, regulations and other decisions made by the group. Need for people’s participation is articulated in terms of efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness, equity in distribution of benefits, sustainability and empowerment of the people*”.

The World Bank (as cited in Kuhn, 1998, p.12) refers to popular participation as “*...participation of the poor and others who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, ethnicity, or gender. It seemed obvious to us to focus on the participation of these poor and disadvantaged groups because, although often the intended beneficiaries, they are usually without voices in the development process*”. Further Matthias Stiefel and Marshall Wolfe (as cited in Kuhn, 1998, p.13) defined popular participation as “*...the organized efforts to increase control over resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control*”. Another distinct character of ‘participatory development’ is a process character which emphasizes on the dynamic structures and transition of society. As the word ‘development’ implies a process of improving living standards, transforming and strengthening the aspects of economic, political, ecological, social, cultural, etc.

Kuhn accounted Kirsten Westergaard’s statement where she referred to studies conducted by the world employment program of the international labour organization (ILO) and the Cornell rural development committee that “*No definition of participation is provided in either study. In Cornell study, the authors have consciously avoided definitional efforts*” (1998, p.14). In another statement made by John M. Cohen and Norman T. Uphoff (as cited in Kuhn, 1998,p.14), where they said that “*It appears more fruitful and proper to regard participation as a descriptive term denoting the involvement of a significant number of*

*persons in situations or actions which enhance their well being, e.g. their income security or self-esteem”.*

Owing its difficulty to have a specific definition Masjid Ramana (as stated in Kuhn, 1998, p.15) simply stated that “*...participation could be either transitive or intransitive; either moral, amoral or immoral; either forced or free; either manipulative or spontaneous”.* Participation may be on one hand constructive as well as obstructive on the other hand depending on the attainment of the conceived objectives which may happen in the system, off the system or against the system. Its distinction should be of direct and indirect modes of involvement (Kuhn, 1998, p.15). Having variance not only in its meaning but also in its forms add to much complexity in defining the term. Verba, Ahmad and Bhat (as cited in Pandey, 1990, p.2) endorsed with the idea that participation in its own term is metamorphose in meaning. The forms of participation thus vary depending upon diversity in cultures, traditions, values, institutions and social structures. Attempt has been made by UNDP Human Development Report 1993 (as cited in Kohn, 1998, p.15), on the basis of diversified cultures, traditions of different nations, regions to conceive general classification between;

*“(i) household participation*

*(ii) economic participation*

*(iii) social and cultural participation (right to culture)*

*(iv) political participation (individually and collectively)”*

Jharta extensively reviewed several works done in the past to conceptualize the meaning of political participation. In her study the works of Nie and Verba, Milbrath and Goel was mentioned, having their opinion that political participation is an effort of private citizens or individuals intending to influence in a way to support government and politics. Other authors like Ali Ashraf and L.N. Sharma were mentioned referring their opinions to political participation as any such activities devised to influence governmental decision-making and actions. Besides this, she abstracted certain voluntary citizens’ activities which indirectly influence government decision makings or politics as conventional political activities whereas those activities that might directly influence decision-makings as unconventional. On the other hand she subscribed her view by quoting the statement of Myron Weiner defining political participation as “*any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended to*

*influence the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs, or the choices of political leaders at any level of government, local or national” (1996.p.12).*

The work of Nightingale, Jain and Tannenbaum was cited in the study titled “*Workplace Participation in Chinese Local Industries*” by Tang (1993) stating that people’s participation in the workplace was understood as the actions of an individual or groups to determine the decision-making outcomes. Wherein the efforts to voice the opinions of the subordinates to their superior; a process of exercising power inclining to influence the management in decision making.

The term ‘participation’ as we discuss may imply variances in its interpretation on contextual alignment that bear different contour of meanings. No definite refinement of its meaning could be thus found. Pandey (1990) thus acknowledged the variation in its meaning as define by different people.

Schwartz (1984) critically analyzed the paradoxical and abstract concept of political participation. The author observed various conceptual understandings and meanings of participation which often the traditional political theorists overlooked it as an ‘object’. Some authors like Aristotle understood participation as an ‘end’ in itself; on the other hand Hobbes construed it as an ‘instrument’. There is much complexity to its meaning as to what exactly is ‘participation’? The dictionary meaning of ‘participation only make things more baseless if one stick to it but what is more open to debate is the lack of concrete political definition of participation. It possesses different values and meanings; is contingent upon the context, which is why impossible to observe empirically neither intelligible ways to observe its acts. Some scientific students of participation agreed upon instrumentalists understanding in defining participation as an episodic public act of pursuance by the private individuals to meet their wants. Schwartz stated that ‘participation’ is not a thing but word that requires explaining something what it means. Any activity or action count as an act of participation is contingent upon the point of view-conceptual template.

Jr and Wood (1982) accounted how in various research recommendations and discussions on ‘participation’, several authors rather emphasized on a manner or form of participation that foster members involvement in the process of decision making in an organization and such acts of involvement that influence on decision outcomes. Pateman (as cited in Jr & Wood, 1982) distinctively elaborated that such policy adhered by leaders restraining involvement of

subordinates to influence on decision outcomes as “pseudo participation” and the term referred as “partial participation” and “full participation” to those involvement of individual enjoying certain degrees of power to determine the decision outcomes. Despite of many variances views in expounding the term ‘participation’; in common, several writers have been subjecting this issue on ‘peoples’ involvement’. Thus underlining the essence of individual involvement Jr and Wood defined the term ‘Participation” as simply as the manner in which the general involvement of members in the process of organization in decision making, whereby distinguishing the actual influence on decision making as ‘control’ (1982). They found their consolation in Mudler’s (as cited in Jr & Wood, 1982) words that no amount of opportunities for participation would compound to the ability to influence decision makings.

Dachler & Wilpert also had the opinion that the implication of different ‘value system’, multidisciplinary paradigm consequences in variety of definitions and explanation and understanding across ‘investigators’; which led to ‘proliferation of concepts’ and ‘divergence in theoretical views’. In their words *“Participation is concerned with topics ranging from individual motivation and ability consideration, through leadership and group dynamic issues, to organizational factors and socio-political structures and processes within and between societies”*. Attempt was made to analyze various defining dimensions of participation. However, no specific definition was given rather than looking into those aspects that might further participation in an organization (1978).

Verba (1967) observed the complexity in defining participation as it varies with the culture, traditions, system of governance which keeps on changing. The question of who ought to participate for ‘what and how’ often arises with the change in time and situation. He attempted to define participation as the “acts by those not formally empowered to make decision- the acts being intended to influence the behavior of those who have such decisional power. And successful participation refers to those acts that have (at least in part) the intended effects”. He further elaborately commented on the definition that:-

1. It stresses on ‘intention’ to persuade decision-makers. Any such arbitrary undertakings in policy formulation of the government officials on the basis of their own beliefs and values and interest without affirming or response to the voice of the common people or citizens ought to be excluded.



2. “Ceremonial” or “support” participation of citizen involvement in activities like parade, community projects, governmental youth programs, voting, etc are dormant in this definition.
3. Participation cannot be articulated marginally rest on electoral process neither reduced nor confined to any particular political act. As the mode of effective participation remained ever a valid question.
4. No participation do not confine on any particular government level.
5. The interaction between the citizens and the decision makers is an act of participation. Participation and its effects must be understood from the perspectives of both the citizens and decision-makers.
6. To examine successful participation and unsuccessful participation renders crucial challenges, where participation is considered not to be necessarily a successful participation.
7. Participation as the acts emphasize to those empowered to make decisions.

In addition Verba stated that the examination of participation extent beyond the relations of citizens and government, that the individuals relations with the authorities of families, schools, organizations and other nongovernmental organizations having crucial impact on their voice in decisions that affects them.

## **2.2 Studies based on Empowerment of Women and Development**

Empowerment according to Das refers to the process of attaining access to knowledge, resources, decision making power and the level of awareness on participation in community to gain control (2015).

Sen & Batliwala (2000) (as cited in Das, 2015.) refers empowerment as “the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both controls over resources and over ideology... (Includes, in addition to extrinsic control) a growing intrinsic capability- greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one’s consciousness that enables one to overcome external barriers...”

Human Development in South Asia (2000) (as cited in Das, 2015) defines that “women empowerment is a change in the context of a women’s life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. Women empowerment is one of the essential factors that promote human development.”

Lalchatuanthangi observed that in the past traditional Mizo society women were looked down and treated inferior as compared to men. Subjugations and discriminations under the influence of traditional patriarchal system was not uncommon that exacerbated the condition of women. However, with the advent of Christianity and modern education the condition of women have been undergone drastic changes in the Mizo society. The process of empowerment of women in Mizoram has shown tremendous improvement mainly on the social and economic condition amongst the Mizo women. On contrary, the religious and political conditions of women were observed unsatisfactory. In spite of adopting several Acts and provisions under the constitution of India, five year plans and state legislations meant for uplifting the condition of women; improvement in religious and political spheres are yet to overcome numerous obstacles in the society (2016).

Bhattacharya & Roy (2015) attempted a study *“Role of Self-Help Groups in Women Empowerment-A Study of Karimkanj District, Assam”* having the objective to assess the role of SHGs in socio-economic development of women. They randomly selected one block out of seven blocks under Karimkanj district and further narrowed down into two villages. The interviews were conducted amongst 25 SHG members. The study revealed that the socio-economic conditions of the women were improving which on the other hand enhanced the political and decision making at the micro level as well as macro level. Also the authors found that involvement in SHGs helped developed women’s confidence to participate in village panchayat and in other public affairs. Thus, the study revealed that SHGs play a tremendous role that positively impact on the condition of women.

Das (2015) in the study *“Women and Empowerment: A Study of the Women’s Status in North-East India”* attempted to accentuate the status of women and empowerment in North-East having the objectives to examine the status and trend of women empowerment, to explain the various dimensions of women empowerment and to suggest measures to bridge the gap between men and women. The study was conducted on the basis of the following indicators viz:- female literacy and gender gap, female workforce participation rate (FWPR), gross enrolment ratio, sex ratio and age at marriage. It was based on the secondary data to assess the condition of women empowerment with the help of method of ranking of states in different indicators. The study revealed that the north eastern states accumulated comparatively higher rank amongst those afore mentioned indicators to the rest of other India

states. However, notably amongst the north eastern states of India, the state of Meghalaya and Assam indicated having the highest rate of female infant mortality rate which is higher than the national average. In addition, in a daunting revelation the impact of traditional gender norms was still prevalent leading to an issue like wife beating in the society.

Lalneihzovi (2012) attempted to examine the condition of women empowerment from the aspect of socio-political dimension. She delved into the condition of political participation of Mizo women in the village council and their involvement in critical decision making. The study referred to the constitutional provisions and state legislative Acts in pertaining to local governance. The guaranteed equal rights and opportunities were accentuated in regards to social, economic and especially to political aspects irrespective of sexes. The study highlighted that the social status of Mizo women against the political status is comparative higher. The status of women's participation in village council indicated that elected women member were still very low and sporadic in the performance. Similarly, low women involvement in critical decision making process was noted as meagre number of women would be employed in government or quasigovernmental organizations. The author had the opinion that implementation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment Act would improve the political condition of women. Reservation of seats was suggested as a requirement to uplift the political participation of women.

Pankaj and Tankha had attempted to examine the extent of empowerment of rural women in their study titled "*Empowerment Effects of the NREGS on Women workers: A study in four states*". The findings revealed that the empowerment effects of the NREGS on rural women at individual level increased their economic contributions in household as their time spent on unpaid work could be diverted to paid wages. The improvement on the consumption choices due to increased in their monetized earning reduced dependency on the male partners. Meanwhile, it was revealed that women's space in decision making in the intra-household widen as their ability to earn income in the family. However, women at the community level in spite of implementation of 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act and NREGS being objectified to strengthen community development process through local institutions by inclusive decision making process, their participation in critical decision making process was found to be discouraging. Facing difficulties and obstacles by the women workers due to lack of crèche for women having lactating child and harassment by the contractors were found not uncommon (2010).

### **2.3 Women's participation in traditional local governance**

Women's participation in national politics in general and local governance in particular has gained much attention from the legislatures, law makers, activists, scholars and the like since the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The importance of women's participation in governance has long been revered in principles yet practically women's participation is virtually invisible till today in most of the countries not to mention India. Availability of voluminous reports and scholarly related articles and journals evidently highlighted the attempts to unearth the status quo of women in governance in congruent with the factors that influence women's representation and participation.

The study on "*Women's Participation in Panchayat and the Impact of Education in Assam*" highlighted the improved condition of women's participation in the local panchayat or council. The implementation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment Act of India which guaranteed minimum of 33% women representation in the local village council paved tremendous opportunities for women in Assam. On the other hand it was viewed that quantitative increase of women's participation in decision making would not bring desirable development. Therefore, qualitative improvement was stressed to be made through government's attempt to further overall development of the Assam state in particular and India as a whole. However, women are not void of issues that limited them for effective participation in the panchayat. The authors categorically pointed out such constraining factors such as lack of state support, non implementation of programs, family constraints, patriarchal system and superiority complex of male. In the other important observation the impact and educational role in molding women gain efficiency in managing the affairs of governance was highlighted. Some of the noted implications of education on women's in governance thus revealed such as improved awareness and confidence amongst women, shield against exploitation, develop creativity, know and consider the value of things and realize good planning and management skills amongst women (Kalita & Baruah, 2015).

Adesanya (2014) conducted an in-depth analysis of the needs for active participation of Christian women in Nigerian governance as they were poorly involved in political arena. It identified, some of the constraining factors that limited Christian women's involvement in

governance were socio-cultural factor, violence that characterized governance, economic and domestic workload, organizational structures and lack of good leadership example of some women. The study recommended that the interested and qualified Christian women should come forwards like Deborah in the bible to contribute the progress and growth of the nation.

In Myanmar attempt were made to answer three important key questions, of the proportion women occupy in decision making in governance, whether structures matter for women's participation and lastly the constraining and enabling factor for women's participation in governance. The study concluded that women's representative in governance is relatively low as compared to men. On contrary to political participation it revealed that women highly participated in civil organizations and held positions in decision making. Another important aspect of this study revealed that both men and women have different governance preferences attributed to gender differences in time use and social relations, gender based violence. Several barriers to women's participation were highlighted including cultural norms and practices, lack of confidence might play significant roles that required special training and policy modification. Governance actors like department for rural development, local non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations were recommended to act collaboratively towards creating an ambience for better women's participation (Minoletti, 2014).

In the study "*Rural Women's Representation and Participation in Local Governance in the Masvingo and Mashonaland Central Provinces of Zimbabwe*", the author employed qualitative research methodology as the research required in-depth investigation of the fact. Out of the 10 provinces and 61 Rural District Councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe, Kurebwa selected the two provinces of Masvingo and Mashonaland Central that contain 15 RDCs and 410 wards. Further the researcher narrowed down to 105 wards by employing purposive sampling technique which consisted of 250 respondents. The sample study or the respondents comprised of 15 District Administrators (DAs), 105 Ward Councilors, 6 officials from NGOs at provincial level, four party district chairpersons of the two political parties dominant in the two provinces and 120 rural women. The objectivity of sampling women councilors was to draw their views and perception towards the process of getting elected in the local councils. Male councilors in supplement to women councilors were interviewed to observe whether their views and perceptions on women's representation and participation bear any variations

from the views of women. The significant incorporation of men in the sampling was to conceive the influence of women upon men in the local government and to draw their views on the possible changes that might occur in the structures as an impact of inclusion of women in governance. Data collection was done by using interview schedule conducted in the two provinces of Zimbabwe with specific reference to rural women. Kurebwa attempted to explore the condition of women in the local governance and to identify such challenges that might influence women's participation; grounding on the efforts and initiatives that are being undertaken by the government as whereas several other organizations for conducive representation and participation of women in governance. The study revealed several impediments for women's participation attributed to political violence against women, culture and socialization, lack of resources, heavy workload: domestic responsibilities, lack of education, personal barriers, lack of information and lack of mutual support among women, institutional factors (2014).

Similar study which aimed to address the issues of low level of female participation was conducted in eight (8) districts of twenty (20) districts of Bhutan. Case studies were conducted on female who were elected in local governance to gain in-depth understanding on influential factors and challenges they faced comparatively with male candidates. The findings revealed that candidates family background and history of leadership in community has no role impact on his or her success in local governance. However, the motivational factors between men and women stood contradictory. Women wanted community support to change the situation towards bringing gender equity and become a role model to encourage the community people while male candidates mostly thought that they could do something for the community. The study found out that major barrier was the traditional household roles and responsibilities compounded by the family and community pressure equally played a significant role amounting deadlock for Bhutanese women. Gender role highly impacted and influenced on women's ability to participate in local governance (Skalnes et. al, n.d.).

In the study "*Women's political participation in Bangladesh: Role of Women's Organization*" the researchers employed qualitative research strategy, exploratory and descriptive case study in nature. The authors attempted to explore the role of women's organizations in the process of change that had helped to promote increase participation of women in Bangladesh. The findings depicted that tremendous influenced were made by

women's organizations on government policies formulation towards creation of ambience for women's participation in politics. The women's organizations were very determined with high responsibility to ensure equal participation in politics despite various challenges emerged being in the patriarchal context of politics (Panday & Li, 2014).

Nagaraja and Kusugal (2013) in their study revealed the evidence of improved condition of women's participation in Local Governance. The study analyzed extend of the then Karnataka Panchayat Raj Policy Act of 1983 and most importantly of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional amendment Acts that impacted on the condition of women in grassroots governance. They found that majority of the women entered politics according to their own volition with reservation policy whereas few undertook under the whims of others but without reservation policy. The study also revealed that most of the women faced difficulties and problems like social, economic, political and cultural. In addition to this, some difficulty that women faced was performing dual roles as in household work and panchayat work. The author suggested that necessary education facilities and trainings need to be provided to promote over all development. The study was conducted in Chitradurga district of Karnataka state.

In "*Women's participation and representation in politics: perspectives from Ghana*" the authors discussed the issues affecting participation in politics and public sector. The main concerned argument was that the women's participation in politics and public life gradually degraded in contrary to the global measures and steps taken. They opined that affirmative action policies must be adopted to counter the deep rooted socio-cultural hindrances that discouraged women to actively participate in politics and public affairs (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013).

In china the system of self governance at grassroots level across the country was introduced and implemented since 1980s. The system of self governance ensured equal participation of both men and women in governance at rural villages. Evidently the success of the system of self governance had enhanced and made drastic improvements in Chinese governance system that resulted in socio-economic developments especially in rural china. Interestingly many scholars condoned with the assertion made by government, that the political status of women had been tremendously improved through obtaining right to participation in the local governance. Further they also argued that the system of local self

governance immensely influenced on the enhancement of both male and female political participation. Moreover, rural governance ensured political accountability, transparency, efficacy and civics competency. In contradiction Wang & Dai (2013) in the study "*Women's Participation in Rural China's Self-Governance: Institutional, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Factors in a Jiangsu county*" found that in contrast to better representation of women in urban china in governance and despite the implementation of local self governance to ensure gender responsive governance by the state, women's representation and participation in rural local governance remained extreme low or limited. No participation in village election could sufficiently enhance women's political aspiration and empowerment remains underdeveloped. The dearth conditioning factors of active participation of women were identified in the study. Low level of education, dependent nature of economic condition, lack of socioeconomic resources, etc curtail women's participation. Moreover, there are other factors that are related to social traditional role expectation that led to stereotyping of women as less capable than man in the public affairs to be expected them to confine at domestic domain. Such social beliefs and expectations consequently discourage women to take important role in governance. In addition to these factors Wang and Dai further identified the institutional factor: frauds and irregularities, government's apathy towards promoting women's political roles, lack of state sponsored women organizations influence on local governance, etc. compounded the condition of women's underrepresentation and low participation in governance. Suggestion was made the government and researchers to look beyond the mere policy of enhancing electoral participation in governance and address such deep-rooted constraints. The study was conducted in the 5 villages of Rudong County in the eastern province of Jiangsu, China. The researcher adopted mixed method for the study and the sampling was done by employing multi-stage sampling technique. Out of the 15 towns under Rudong, 5 towns were selected that represents various developmental levels. Further, one village from each of the 5 towns were randomly selected and from each village 20 male and 20 female respondents were again randomly chose. In addition 20 interviews were conducted. The collection of data was undertaken by using Questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedule.

Hossain attempted a study on the "*Influence of Social Norms and Values of Rural Bangladesh on Women's participation in the Union Parishad*" and found that the patriarchal



norms and values highly constraint women's participation in decision making. The attitudes of the people towards women's involvement in the union depicted inability to accept women in the public and insecurity amongst male sections. Women's opinions were seen insignificant and prejudice. In addition the political structure and culture were viewed as an impediment for women participation in decision making. Thus, prevalence of gender hierarchy in decision making limited women's involvement and denied acceptance amongst the male members. The study employed qualitative method and data were collected using semi-structured interview schedule, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) [2012].

The study on "*Women Empowerment and Good Urban Governance in Iran*" attempted to examine the role of women in urban management and the perspective of more inclusive and their active participation. The conceptual analysis of good governance was made. Special focus was given on women's capabilities and significant needs for active participation were examined. The study depicted that women empowerment is imperative to ensure active role in urban live. Meanwhile, it showed that available means were utilized to improve their capabilities. On the other hand the paper discussed the needs for further research to understand obstacles entrenched by socio-cultural that hampers higher rate of women participation in governance ( Rezazadeh, 2011).

The study on "*Women's Participation in Village Autonomy in China: Evidence from Zhejiang Province*" attempted to examine the status of rural Women's participation in governance from two dimensions: women's political consciousness and their actual roles in power structures. The study compared men and women on their level of political consciousness to draw the similarities and differences between them and their political cognition and motivation to participate in politics. Economic characteristics were taken into consideration to draw whether its development can lead to advancement of women's participation. The study revealed no significance difference between men and women in respect to political awareness and the level of motivation in political participation as women and men had similar level awareness and motivation to that of men. However, the survey data indicated that the actual position of women in power structures appeared to be minimal and have not obtained equal opportunities contrary to their level of political cognition and motivation. Even after organic law or self governance had been implemented since long 1988, various traditional factors impeded women to equally participate as men. The prevalence of

traditional stereotyping sexual division of labor, patriarchal expectation of role performance as home maker or to manage the home affairs greatly disadvantaged women. “..... that the traditional expectation originated in circumstances that saw limited opportunities for travel and social interaction for women, which explain their extremely narrow world view and obedience to the traditional doctrine imposed on them”. The condition is being compounded by government’s apathy towards initiating women’s participation in consonant with the changing environment. Lack of gender responsive legislation or patriarchal centric legislation and lack of mandatory quota system was seen as enormous challenges that led low participation of women in politics. Another critical factor was women’s collective mentalities: one that has become accustomed to exclusion and subordination and double dependency nature. Thus, traditional and customary factors greatly influenced and act as constraints to women’s participation in politics. The article also revealed positive relationship between the level of women’s awareness and motivation towards political participation. However, economic development and advancement showed no causal linkage towards improvement of the condition of women’s participation in politics. The study was conducted across different time frame from 1999 to 2006 in the Zhejiang province of China. The collection of data was undertaken by using questionnaires tools which was supplemented by interviews. The survey undertook across Zhejiang province during three main different periods. Firstly, it undertook during the period from 1999 to 2000 in Wenzhou, Lishui, Shaoxing and Taizhou having 1245 respondents. Secondly, at Hangzho, Huzhou, Lishui and Wenzhou during 2004, data was collected from 991 respondents. Thirdly, during 2006 145 respondents were selected from Zhuantang Township and Hangzhou for collecting data. The study areas were purposively selected on the basis of economic development which included rural and semirural areas (Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009).

A study on the “*Participation of Women in the Panchayati Raj Institution*” was conducted to know the extent of women’s participation in decision making and constraints faced by them in performing their roles. The findings revealed that despite their attendance and presence in panchayats no substantial improvement on the condition of women could be seen. Women could barely raise their opinions and views regardless of the relevance and cogent assertion not without fierce opposition and disrespect from their male counterparts. They are still treated inferior and subordinated under the fist of male dominancy patriarchal

set up. The study was conducted in 10 (ten) blocks of Jammu districts and 4 (four) blocks of Kathua districts. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting 33 respondents for the purpose and interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used for data collection (Kaul & Sahni, 2009).

*“Changes in villager’s knowledge perceptions and attitudes concerning gender roles and relation in Bangladesh”* is to examine the status of changing perceptions towards gender roles and gender relations across time by using survey and interview approach to collect data. Interestingly data revealed tremendous changes and improvement in people’s knowledge and perceptions towards discrimination and women empowerment. Moreover, positive attitudes developed towards marital issues and violence against women over time. Barriers to gender equality could be seen due to traditional patriarchal norms, values, cultural structures (Alim, 2009)

The study titled *“This is not a meeting for Women”: The Socio-cultural Dynamic of Rural Women’s Political participation in the Bolivian Andes* revealed the disparity between the sexes even there is a perception of equal participation in decision making. It indicated that the Andian notion of gender complimentary as a sign of gender equality, in reality women are subjugated and shun to subscribe equal participation in community decision making process (Pape, 2008).

*“Holding up half of the sky? Attitudes towards women as managers in the people’s Republic of China”*, the study highlighted historical cultural, social and legal context of the Chinese society. The empirical examination was conducted comparatively on the attitudes of students and workers towards women as managers. The findings advocated that there was a positively significant gender and sample effect, however the gender effect directed higher effect compared to its sample effect. The study further revealed that women had more positive liberal and egalitarian attitudes towards women as managers compared to men (Bowen, Wu, Hwang, & Scherer, 2007)

Another intriguing study titled *“Women and Globalization: A study of 180 countries, 1975-2000”* was conducted to delve into the query of how the increasing rate of globalization impact on the social, economic, political condition of women. Most research on gender and international relations seldom developed in qualitative testing. In this study the researchers attempted to fill the gap p by advancing the hypothesis that the increasing cross

national interconnection and interaction enhance improvement in equality and the status of women. They had the opinion that economic liberalization created new opportunities and resources for women similarly, with the increase in international relation more ideas and norms of equality for women could be diffused that led to overall improvement in women condition. The study examined the impact of globalization on women's levels of life expectancy, literacy and participation in the economy and parliamentary office by employing cross-sectional-time series regression techniques. Improved condition of women could be attributed to association or involvement with international trade, foreign direct investment, membership in the UN and World Bank and ratification of the convention on Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The outcome predicted positive relation with the improvement of status of women and arising level of globalization. The interconnectivity and association with international organizations and conventions played significant role in uplifting the condition of women's literacy, participation in economy and representation in parliament. Further the model in respect to life expectancy and literacy revealed that some form of international association yielded positive gain of equality amongst men and women. The researchers concluded that though many positive impacts of globalization may be observed, generalization of the result would be deemed erroneous (Gray, Kittilson, & Sandholtz, 2006).

Conway (2001) examined on the condition of women and political participation. The study focused on the issues of low rates of women elected in the offices despite their increased participation in politics in USA. The author addressed on the sociological theory which emphasizes on the cultural explanation of women's low rate of public offices. The prevalence patriarchal system that influenced on the assignment of women's roles and the significant social norms limited women to obtain necessary skills and knowledge was highlighted. In addition to this, explanation on the low rate of women involvement in elected office was stressed on the roles and responsibilities, time demand of women and the acquisition of skills and knowledge where men were seen more opportune than women engage in those organizations that nurture skills. Another factor like the selection process of candidates and the structure of the election caucuses that impasse women involvement.

Mobido (1995) questioned the lack of women's active participation in trade unions. He interviewed 35 women immigrants from different countries of the world who made up the

significant memberships in the local unions in Toronto, Canada. Some studies observed that low language skills determined women's lack of participation however, Mobido refuted that it is just one minor obstacle. He argued that the issues of class, ethnicity/race and gender remained the major obstacles to women's active participation in the union locals.

The existing literatures accentuated the perspectives of women empowerment and women's participation in local governance at different settings. Most of the research works being reviewed have been examined on the condition of women's participation and the challenges being faced by women in governance. The conditions of women in the local governance or women in politics in a broader sense albeit made tremendous development yet stands still low in respect to opportunity or participation comparative to men. The articles revealed more or less the similar constraining factors that limit women's participation in governance attributing to system or structure of governance and the men's attitude towards women. Another significant observation is that although the studies focused the condition at the local level of governance and women no specific study was found that dealt with the condition of women in traditional local governance. Therefore, this study will contribute towards enrichment of literature which is concerned with the development of women in the traditional local governance.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter mainly addresses the nature of the present research settings, methodology and design of the study. In any manner of empirical investigations or scientific explorations, systematic organization of the procedures is of significant characteristic in achieving the desirable objectives of the studies. The credibility and reliability of study outcomes is determined by its well mechanized design, systematically defining the research setting by employing suitable methodology, organize compatible tools and techniques for data collection and analysis. In conjunct to this, a well consideration of the contextual viability of methods and techniques is of prime importance.

The present study on the women's participation in Traditional Local Governance is an explorative attempt to establish the contextual status quo of women in governance. Information have been elicited from various sources using different tools such as semi-structured interview schedule, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), observation and formal and informal discussions. This chapter is structured in two main sections. The first section deals with the profile of the study area intertwine with the profile of the two sample villages. In the second section the methodological aspects of the study is presented. It includes the study design, sampling, tools of data collection, data processing and analysis and the concepts and definitions.

#### **3.1 The Setting: Profile of the study area**

The setting of the present study elaborates profiles of the state of Manipur and Ukhul district: block and the selected two sample villages.

##### **3.1.1 The state of Manipur**

The state of Manipur which is also known as the land of jewels lies at the latitude of 23.83°N and 25.68°N and at longitude of 93.03°E and 94.78°E, occupying the total area of 22,327 sq km. As per the 2011 census, Manipur has the total population of 2,721,756. Its total literacy rate stands at 76.94% which comprises of male literacy rate with 83.58% and female literacy rate stands at 70.26%. Manipur is surrounded by Nagaland in the north, Mizoram in the south and Assam in the west as well as Myanmar in the east. The Manipur state can be geographically divided into hill region and valley region. The hill region

composes of five districts viz. Senapati, Tangmenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Ukhrul districts whereas valley region comprises of four districts viz. Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts. Thus, the hill districts occupy 90 percent (20089 sq km) of the total area of the state and the remaining 10 percent (2238 sq km) of the total area of the state is being occupied by the valley region.



Figure 3.1. The state of Manipur

### 3.1.2 Ukhrul District

Ukhrul District in the north east of Manipur is at present inhabited by the Tangkhuls and a handful of other tribes consisting of Kukis and Meiteis. It is located at 25.12\*N-94.37\*E covering the total area of 4544 sq km. According to 2011 census it has the total population of 1,83,115 and the average literacy rate is 81.35%. Out of which 85.52% comprised of male and 76.95% comprised of female. During the period of British-India in 1919 Ukhrul district was initially marked out as sub-division but later upgraded to a district in 1968. Its maiden area covered 8200 sq km until it sliced and Tengnoupal now known as Chandel district was carved out on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1983. Since then the so called present Ukhrul district came into existence in 1983. The district has now seven (7) sub-divisions that coterminous with the eight (8) developmental blocks.

The Naga people are the inhabitants of the north eastern parts of India and north western Burma now Myanmar. Naga people are a conglomeration of multiple tribes settling across north eastern states of India viz. Nagaland, parts of Manipur, Arunachal as whereas in the north western parts of Sagiang province of Myanmar consisting of five townships viz. Layshi, Lahe, Nanyun, Hkamti, Homalin, etc. and in Kachin states. There are about different sixty-six (66) tribes of Nagas sharing common culture, custom, religious beliefs, etc. They belonged to Mongoloid race, speaking various distinct Tibeto-Burman languages (Zimik, 2015).

The Tangkhul tribe is one of the major tribes of Naga settling in the areas lying between latitude 25.5\*N -25.41\*N and longitude 94\*E-95\*E in the north eastern part of India extending across the north western part of Myanmar. The Tangkhul country is being demarcated by the international boundary of India and Myanmar that sliced away some parts to the east. Greater portion which remain in India are found in Manipur Ukhrul district. Some Tangkhul villages are also merged to present district of Senapati. On the other hand the Tangkhul villages which merged to present Myanmar are found along the Pansa and Somra tract in the north, Samshok Thangthut state in the south and in the east connecting to Kachin (, *Shimray, 2000, pp. 2-3, 2001,p.32*).



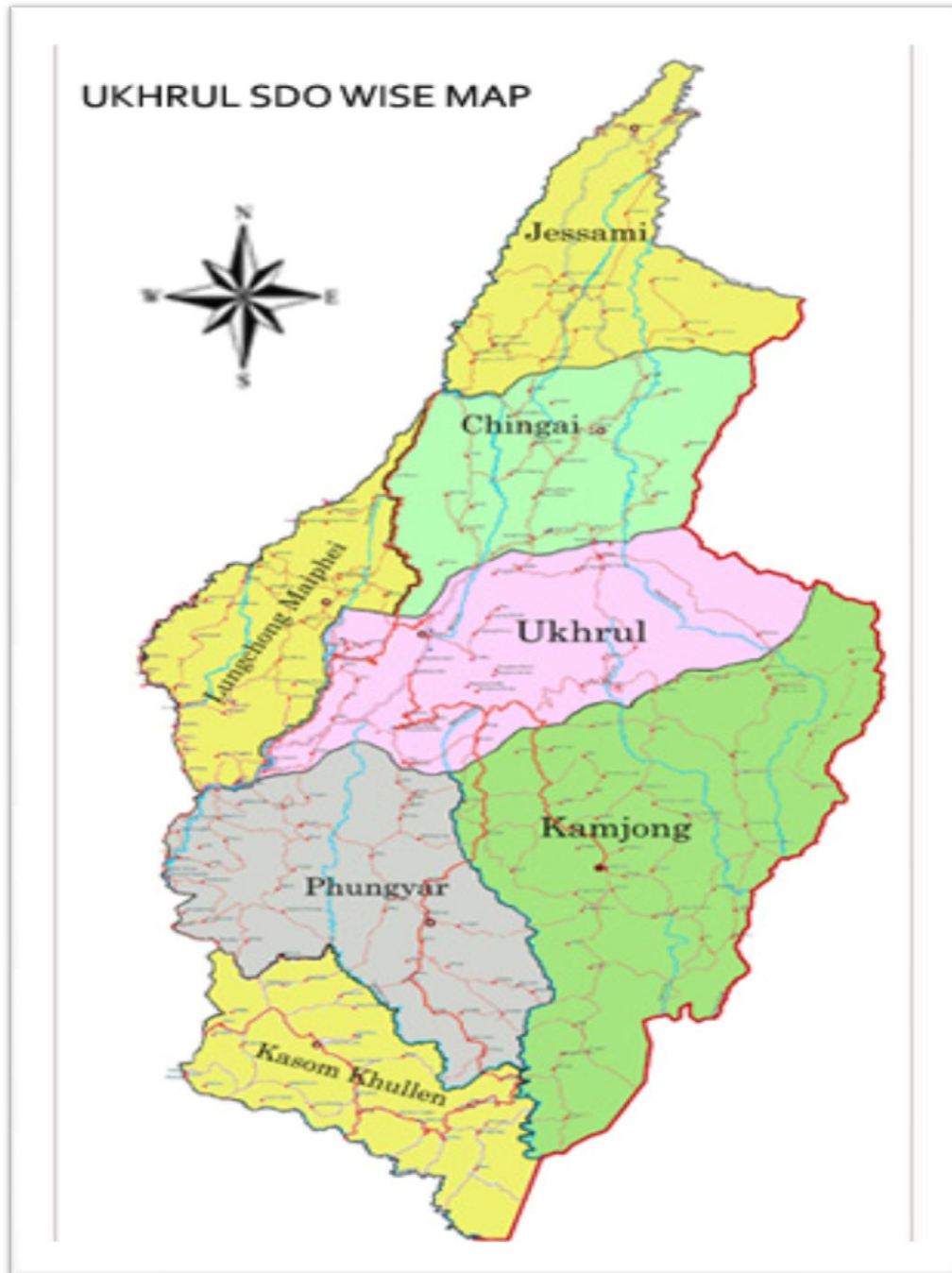


Figure 3.2 Ukhrul District

### **3.1.3 Profile of the Sample Villages**

The sample villages are categorized into two categories on the basis of the status of female literacy rate namely:- the least developed village and the most developed village. Sihai khunou village has the total literacy rate of 51.51% with 43.88% of female literacy rate as per the 2011 census. It is the village having the lowest female literacy rate amongst the villages under Ukhrul central subdivision. Therefore it, has been categorized as the least developed village for the study purpose. On the other hand, Shirui Aze (Chingkha) has the total literacy rate of 95.49% with 92.65% of female literacy rate as per the 2011 census which appeared to be the village having the highest female literacy rate under Ukhrul central subdivision. Therefore, it has been categorized as the most developed village for the study purpose.

#### **3.1.3.1 Shirui Village**

Shirui village is located in the northern part of Ukhrul in Ukhrul district, Manipur. It is 15 kilometers away from the Ukhrul district, headquarter. The village is surrounded by Ukhrul in the west, Langdang village in the south, Mapum village in the east while Shihai village in the north east with Lunghar in the north. Shirui is bestowed with bountiful flora and popularly recognized for its rare 'Lilium mackliniae' found on Shirui kashong or Shirui peak. The National Highway 150 Imphal-Kohima via Jessami passes through the village. The village is divided into two parts vis. Shirui Ato (Chingthak) and Shirui Aze (Chingkha) however, it is under one single traditional administration system headed by hereditary headmen. The Shirui dialect used by the local inhabitants belongs to Tibeto-Burman Language Family. Agriculture has been the primary occupation of the Shirui inhabitants. Majority of them upholds Christianity as their religion.

It is recorded that the Shirui Ato (Chingthak) has 100 households with the total population of 472 which consist of 296 male and 176 female as per the 2011 census. It has the literacy rate of 90.31% with male literacy rate stands at 93.02% against 86.06% female literacy rate.

Meanwhile Shirui Aze (Chingkha) has 184 households recorded with the total population of 793, of which 393 are female and male make up to 400. Its literacy rate stands to 95.49% out of which male literacy make up to 98.27% while female literacy rate stands to 92.65%.

### **3.13.2 Sihai Khunou Village**

The term Sihai refers to a group of villages: Sihai Khullen, Shihai Khunou and Shihai kahaophung that are located in the north of Ukhrul district headquarter, Manipur. Sihai Khullen is distanced about 37 kilometers from Ukhrul that connects partially by National Highway 150 Imphal-Kohima via Jessami. While Sihai khunou is approximately an hour travelled by motor from Sihai khullen Village. Historically, it is narrated that the term Sihai derives from the word ‘Saanhee’ meaning ‘Cow’s Jewel’ in local dialect or ‘Sei-hai’ in Tangkhul lingua franca. The term ‘Saanhee’ later came to know as ‘Sihai’ as the outsiders could not pronounce the local dialect. The origin of the word traced back during the period of migration and settlement. According to a legend a cow was slaughtered as sacrifice to appease their god(s) in commemorating the occasion of the settlement and found a Jewel in cow’s bowel. As per the Hill House Counting 2014 the total number of households in Sihai khunou village is 181, and holding the total population of 372 of which 194 are male with 178 are female as per the 2011 Census. The total literacy rate of the village according to 2011 stands to 51.51%. Of which the male literacy rate stands to 58.13% and female literacy rate stands to 43.88%. The primary occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture.

### **3.2 Methodology**

The present study is cross sectional in nature and exploratory in design. It is based on the primary data collected through semi-structured interview schedule. The sampling frame consists of rural women from the selected two villages while the sample units are women at the age of above 18. The primary data is supplemented with secondary data collected from official records of the Tangkhul traditional organizations. Moreover, Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) are conducted to acquire better understanding of the community context and the system of governance.

#### **3.2.1 Sampling**

The study adopted multistage sampling procedure to select the town, block and villages based on the available literacy level. Ukhrul centre subdivision/block was selected purposively on the basis of highest literacy status of women out of the existing eight (8) developmental blocks. Further two villages were selected for the study which has least educational status and most educational status from the chosen block. Population of the study composed of women living in semi urban villages. Non-Probability - Convenience sampling

methods was employed to select respondents from the determined villages. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed, of these constituted 25 respondents each from the two selected village.

### **3.2.2 Tools of Data collection.**

Semi-structured interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are used for data collection. Quantitative data were collected simultaneously with qualitative data by using semi-structured interview schedule. The study comprised three main sources of qualitative information to enable reliable in-depth analysis; that is semi-structured interviews at individual level, guided discussions with variances of community groups and interview with key informants comprised of community leaders and elders. All together 12 KIIs and 5 FGDs were conducted within the two villages to elicit information that would shed light in understanding the context.

### **3.2.3 Data Processing and Analysis**

The quantitative data collected through field survey was processed through MsXcel and analyzed with the help of SPSS software. Simple averages, percentages and proportions, were used to analyze the data. Free listing was conducted and the analysis was done by using Antropac software.

### **3.2.4 Concepts and Definitions**

#### **Traditional**

According to *Merriam-Webster* traditional means:-

1. (a) an inherited established, or customary pattern of thought, action or behavior (as a religion practice or a social custom)  
(b) a belief or story or a body of beliefs or stories relating to the past that are commonly accepted as historical thought not verified.
2. The handing down of information beliefs and custom by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction.
3. Cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs and institutions
4. Characteristic manner, method, or style.

According to *Cambridge dictionary*:

It refers to a belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of these belief, etc. in a particular society or group.

### **Traditional Structure**

It refers to informal institutions that do not derive their existence from the constitution of the states or the formal institutions, but are developed and nurtured by the people. They are rooted in traditional or indigenous history, tradition and culture. In another words traditional or indigenous structures are usually informal having rooted to a long historic meaning of the past, tradition and culture (Lutz & Linder, 2004; Olowu & Erero, 1996)

### **Participation/political participation**

Rowe and Frewer viewed public participation/participation at a general level “*as the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development*” (2004).

Kuhn defined participatory development as “*the partaking of a maximum of concerned social and political actors in identifying, designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development activities including control and decision-making over the allocation of financial resources*” (1998, p. 11).

Kumari viewed ‘participation’ as an organized effort of groups or individuals in a given social situation to enhance control over resources and management of institutions. In other words it is a voluntary effort of an individuals or groups in contributing for the progress of programs and overall national development. Thus, in general political participation was stated as those members’ voluntary activities in a society contributing to formulation of public policy and selection of leaders or rulers (2006. Chapter 3).

### **Governance**

Rahman, Wadood & Eusuf (2002) recounted the work of Akash stating that the term ‘Governance’ has been loosely defined and to venture a clear-cut explication may be difficult. The term governance has been used in a way that can incorporate various social, political and cultural variables as an “umbrella concept” within its discourse. Hye (2002) also confirmed the complexity of diversified views in defining governance conjunct to the researchers’

ideological convictions. The conceptualization of governance has been at one juncture narrowly confined to certain branches of government that kept away the involvement of private sector and civil society.

The existence of numerous accounts on governance evidently enriched the human knowledge and understanding in managing the affairs of a country. Basu (2003) conceptualized governance as a manner of exercising authority and managing the economic and social affairs. It can be classified into three distinct features:-

- (i). The form of political regime.
- (ii). Authority over the management of economic, social and resources development.
- (iii). Designing, formulating, policy implementation and discharge functions.

Thus, it is viewed as the exercise of political, social, economic and administrative authority in managing the affairs of a country.

*World Bank* defined governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. Three distinct aspects are identified:- (i) the form of political regime (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economy and social resources for development; and (iii) the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

*UNDP* viewed as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, process and institutions through which citizen and group articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

*International Institute of Administrative Science* refers governance as the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and economic and social development. Governance is a broader notion than government. Governance involves interaction between these formal institutions and those of civil society.

### **Traditional Governance/Local Governance**

Hye (2002) viewed local government system as an institution at par with the other formal organ of state. In the local governance like central government authority perform various levels of functions (agriculture, health, education, road development, etc). Having the better proximity with the people, the local government can have a better impact of the

services and developmental activities. Thus, opined the local government institutions involvement in various ways viz: (a) Program, project formulation and implementation (b) Educational institutions, hospital and other government aid programs (c) tackling in removing various social evil and (d) Better accountability and transparency can be maintained.

“Local Governance comprises of a set of institutions, mechanisms and process through which citizen and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations at the local level. It requires partnership between local governmental institutions, civil society organizations and private sector for participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable service delivery and local development. It necessitates empowering local governments with authority and resources and building their capacity to function as participatory institutions that are responsive and accountable to the concerns to function as participatory institutions that are responsive and accountable to the concerns and needs of all citizens. At the same time, it is concerned with strengthening of grass roots democracy and empowering citizens, communities and their organizations such as CBOs and NGOs to participate as equal partners in local governance and local development process”. (UNDP)

### **3.2.5 Operational Definitions**

- ❖ *Women’s Participation* refers to voluntary or involuntary activities or efforts or involvement of the Tangkhul women in decision making process to contribute to policy making and overall societal development.
- ❖ *Traditional Local Governance* is the system of the Tangkhul village governance conforms to its customary law.
- ❖ *Governance* refers to the process of decision making in the affairs pertaining to social, economic and political of the village.
- ❖ *Tradition* refers to the tradition of the Tangkhul Naga tribe.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study attempts to explore the status quo of women's participation in traditional local governance (TLG) in Tangkhul Naga Villages of Ukhrul District, Manipur. For the purpose two villages namely Sihai village and Shirui village were selected on the basis of the relevant educational status of women. These two villages were further categorized into least developed village and most developed village based on the above indicators for the study intention. The total sample unit composed of only 50 women respondents; 25 women respondents each were selected randomly from the respective villages. In addition 12 (Twelve) key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to establish the cogent structural understanding of traditional system and practices of governance. The key informants comprised of male and female senior citizens, village leaders, leaders of the civil society organizations, chief of the clans, and headmen. Meanwhile in adjunct to this a total of 5 (Five) focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to corroborate their views and perception towards women in governance. The participants of FGDs comprised of church leaders, the village council members and leaders of the women organizations.

The following data shows the sample diverse response to the semi-structured interview schedule employed during the course of data collection which was assumed an extrapolated ramification of KIIs and FGDs elicited information. The tables were tabulated on the basis of related different sections and sub-sections.

#### **4.1 Profile of the respondents**

The profile of the respondents highlighted the basic information about the respondents. In this section classification were made on the basis of four major characteristics. It comprised of the demographic characteristics, familial characteristics, social characteristics and economic characteristics.

##### **4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

The demographic is the term used to denote the structural change of a group/population. It simply can be understood as the grouping on the basis of certain characteristics. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are discussed in table 4.1 which is categorized into three characteristics such as the age group, educational status and the marital status.



**Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Sl. No	Characteristics	Women Development		Total N =50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
<b>1</b>	<b>Age Group</b>			
	Youth	6 (24.0)	10 (40.0)	16 (32.0)
	Young Adult	14 (56.0)	13 (52.0)	27 (54.0)
	Middle Adult	3 (12.0)	1 (4.0)	4 (8.0)
	Young Old	1 (4.0)	1 (4.0)	2 (4.0)
	Middle Old	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Very Old	1 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)
	Mean Age	2.1	1.7	1.9
	Standard Deviation	1.0	.7	.9
<b>2</b>	<b>Educational Status</b>			
	Illiterate	5 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.0)
	Primary level	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	Middle level	8 (32.0)	1 (4.0)	9 (18.0)
	HSLC level	9 (36.0)	4 (16.0)	13 (26.0)
	HSSLC level	3 (12.0)	14 (56.0)	17 (34.0)
	Graduate level	0 0.0	4 (16.0)	4 (8.0)
	Post Graduate level and Above	0 0.0	2 (8.0)	2 (4.0)
	Mean Educational Status	2.2	4.0	3.1
	Standard Deviation	1.2	.9	1.4
<b>3</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>			
	Married	19 (76.0)	16 (64.0)	35 (70.0)
	Unmarried	4 (16.0)	8 (32.0)	12 (24.0)
	Widow	2 (8.0)	1 (4.0)	3 (6.0)

Source: Computed

Figures in parentheses are percentages

In the first characteristic, the age group of the respondents, is divided into six sub categories which are youth (Below – 29 years), young adult (30-39 years), middle adult (40-59 years), young old (60-69years), middle old (70-79 years), and very old (80+years). The data shows that more than half (54.0%) of the respondents belonged to the age group of young adult. Of which comparatively least developed village and most developed village had more than half that is 56% and 52% respondents respectively. Nearly one-third (32%) of the respondents were comprised of the age group of youth. Least developed village had nearly one-fourth (24%) that belonged to the age group of youth and another two-fifth (40%) of the respondents fell between the age group of youth belonged to the most developed village. Also the respondents of more than one-tenth (12%) from least developed village and 4% of respondents were belonging to the most developed village that composed the total respondents of 8% at the age group of middle adult. Further, 4% of the total respondents constituted the young old age group, with equally 4% respondents in both the study villages that belonged to this age group. Meanwhile very old comprised of 2% of the total respondents, of which 4% of the respondents belonged to the least developed village while there was no respondent that belonged to the most develop village.

The second characteristics constitute the educational status of the respondents. It is sub divided into 6 (six) different educational levels viz., illiterate, primary (1-4), middle (5-7), high school leaving certificate [(HSLC) (8-10)], higher secondary school leaving certificate [(HSSLC (11-12)], graduate (BA/BSC) and post graduate (MA/Msc) & above. Maximum of slightly more than one-third (34%) of the total respondents had achieved HSSLC, followed by respondents with HSLC qualification that constituted nearly one-fourth (26%) and slightly more than one-sixth (18%) of the entire respondents had studied up to the middle school level. While the total respondents of one-tenth (10%) had no education that is Illiterate. Respondents who were graduated comprised of 8% and the remaining 4% of the respondents had completed post-graduation & above. The comparative examination of the data from the two study villages revealed that, least developed village had the maximum of more than one-third (36%) respondents who had already completed HSLC whereas most developed village had the maximum of more than a half (56%) respondents who had completed HSSLC. On the other hand, another significant indication is on the completion of educational level of graduate and post graduate & above which was achieved by none of the respondents belonging to the least developed village. However, differences between the two villages could be observed that a sixth (16%) and 8% of the total respondents belonged to the most developed village had

respectively completed graduation and post graduation. Further, nearly one-third (32%) of the respondents belonged to the least developed village and 4% of the total respondents belonged to the most developed village had completed middle level of education. On the other hand it is important to note that one-fifth (20%) of the respondents who were illiterate belonged to the least developed village however, there were no respondents without educational qualification among the respondents belonged to the most developed village.

The third characteristics represented the marital status of the respondents. The marital status of the respondents is further categorized into three sub categories; married, unmarried, widow, etc. The maximum proportion of more than two-third (70%) of respondents were married that composed of more than three-fourth (76%) of respondents belonged to the least developed village and nearly two-third (64%) of respondents belonged to the most developed village. The study consisted of respondents who were unmarried and were accounted for one-fifth (24%) of the total respondents with one-sixth (16%) and less than one-third (32%) respondents belonged to the least developed village and the most developed village respectively. Further, the study had comprised of 6% of respondents who were widow and it had accounted for 8% and 4% of respondents that belonged to the least developed village and the most developed village respectively.

#### **4.1.2 Familial Characteristics of the Respondents**

The familial characteristic is an important aspect of the respondents' profile. Family is an immediate social institution of a person where one develops and learns social skills and behavior. The assign roles and responsibilities, power relations within a family structure highly define the nature of a person. Human characters, behavior, perception, attitude, etc are the outcomes of interaction and development within one's family. Table 4.2 represents the familial characteristics of the respondents. Its characteristics are divided into three categories viz. type of family, size of family and gender of head of the household.

The first characteristic is sub categorized into three types: nuclear family, joint family and extended family. The data revealed that majority (92%) of the respondents hailed from nuclear family and with just 6% and 2% of the total respondents hailed from the extended family and joint family respectively. A maximum of 96% and 88% of the total respondents from the least developed village and the most developed village respectively belonged to nuclear family.

**Table 4.2 Familial Characteristics of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Characteristics	Women Development		Total N=50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
<b>1</b>	<b>Type of Family</b>			
	Nuclear Family	24 (96.0)	22 (88.0)	46 (92.0)
	Joint Family	0 0.0	1 (4.0)	1 (2.0)
	Extended Family	1 (4)	2 (8)	3 (6)
<b>2</b>	<b>Size of Family</b>			
	Small Size	3 (12.0)	8 (32.0)	11 (22.0)
	Medium Size	16 (64.0)	13 (52.0)	29 (58.0)
	Large Size	6 (24.0)	4 (16.0)	10 (20.0)
<b>3</b>	<b>Gender of head</b>			
	Male	23 (92.0)	24 (96.0)	47 (94.0)
	Female	2 (8.0)	1 (4.0)	3 (6.0)

Source: Computed

Figures in parentheses are percentages

The second characteristic composed of the size of family which is further sub divided into three categories as small size (1-3), medium size (4-6), large (7-Above). More than half (58%) of the total respondents have a family with medium size. Another (22%) more than one-fourth respondents belonged to small size family. Respondents belonging to large size family constituted just one-fifth (20%) of the entire respondents. Comparatively, (64%) nearly two-third of the respondents from the least developed village have medium size family to that of more than a half (52%) of the respondents belonged to the most developed village. Also more than one-fifth (24%) and more than one-sixth (16%) of the respondents from both the least developed village and most developed village have large size family. Whereas, small size family is more prevalent amongst the respondents belonging to the most developed village with less than one-third (32%) as compared to that of one-eight (12%) respondents from the least developed village.

The third characteristics comprised of the gender of head of the household. It is important to know the gender of the household due to the fact that women are in the position of decision making. The characteristic is divided into two sub-categories viz. male and

female. Majority (94%) of the total respondents belonged to the household headed by male and the remaining 6% of the respondents belonged to the household headed by female.

#### 4.1.3 Social Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-cultural characteristics play very important role in determining the nature and behavior of women in governance. Various socio-cultural factors act as an advantages as well as disadvantages to women's participation in governance (Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009; Wang & Dai, 2013). The Table 4.3 represents the social characteristics of the respondents are discussed on the basis of four categories namely: ethnicity, tribe, religion and denomination.

**Table 4.3 Social Characteristics of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Characteristics	Women Development		Total N=50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
1	Ethnicity			
		Naga	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)
	Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	Tribe			
		Tangkhul	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)
	Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3	Religion			
		Christian	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)
	Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
4	Denomination			
		Baptists	24 (96.0)	24 (96.0)
	Catholics	1 (4.0)	1 (4.0)	2 (4.0)

Source: Computed                      Figures in parentheses are percentages

The table vividly highlighted that the entire respondents belongs to the Naga ethnic group that belongs to the tribal group of Tangkhul. The table shows that the entire respondents are following the religion of Christianity out of which majority (96%) of the respondents are belonging to Baptist denomination and the remaining 4% of the respondents are within the Roman Catholic denomination.

#### 4.1.4 Economic Characteristics of the respondents

Table 4.4 constituted of the economic characteristics of the respondents, which are divided into two characteristics viz. occupation and annual income. Economic characters can be an important determinant factor for women's participation in governance. The first characteristics as in occupation are further sub categorized on the basis of the respondents' nature of employment. They are: no response, government employee, private employee, self employed, cultivator, student, home maker, etc.

**Table 4.4 Economic Characteristics of the respondents**

Sl. No	Characteristics	Women Development		Total N=50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
1	<b>Occupations</b>			
	No Response	0 (0.0)	1 (4.0)	1 (2.0)
	Govt. Employee	2 (8.0)	2 (8.0)	4 (8.0)
	Private Employee	0 (0.0)	3 (12.0)	3 (6.0)
	Self Employed	0 (0.0)	3 (12.0)	3 (6.0)
	Cultivator	20 (80.0)	8 (32.0)	28 (56.0)
	Student	1 (4.0)	3 (12.0)	4 (8.0)
Home Maker	2 (8.0)	5 (20.0)	7 (14.0)	
2	<b>Annual Income</b>			
	Below ₹40000	5 (20.0)	2 (8.0)	7 (14.0)
	₹40001-₹60000	10 (40.0)	7 (28.0)	17 (34.0)
	₹60001- ₹80000	7 (28.0)	3 (12.0)	10 (20.0)
	₹80001 - ₹100000	3 (12.0)	8 (32.0)	11 (22.0)
	₹100001 - ₹120000	0 (0.0)	3 (12.0)	3 (6.0)
₹120001 & Above	0 (0.0)	2 (8.0)	2 (4.0)	

Source: Computed

Figures in parentheses are percentages

Amongst the occupational activities of the entire respondents who are practicing cultivation indicated the highest chosen occupation with more than a half (56%) of the total respondents, of which more than 80% respondents are from the least developed village and less than one-third (32%) respondents are from the most developed village. And in following, one-seventh (14%) of the total respondents are home maker. The differences show that one fifth (20%) of the respondents and 8% of the respondents are belonging to the most developed village and the least developed respectively. There is an equal distribution of 8% of the respondents between the student respondents and government employee from both the least developed village and the most developed village. Of the total respondents, an equal number of 6% of the respondents are private employee and self-employed. However, the remaining 2% of the respondents did not disclose their occupational status.

The annual income of the respondents are divided six categories as Below ₹40000, ₹40001-₹ 60000, ₹60001- ₹80000, ₹ 80001 - ₹ 100000, ₹ 100001 - ₹ 120000, ₹ 120001 & Above, etc. Of the total respondents a maximum of more than one-third (34%) respondent's annual income is falling between ₹40001-₹ 60000, followed by more than one-fifth (22%) respondents who is having an annual income of ₹ 80001 - ₹ 100000, and one-fifth (20%) of the total respondents annual income is between ₹60001- ₹80000. Thus, one-seventh (14%) of the respondents have an annual income below ₹40000. And a minimum of 6% and 4% of the respondents annual income is between ₹100001 – ₹120000 and above ₹120000 & above respectively.

#### **4. 2 Respondents' Awareness: Generic profile of the Traditional Local Council**

Table 4.5 comprises of the awareness level of respondents on the generic profile of the traditional local council. The village council profile are classified as head of the village council/village authority, mode of selection of the head of the village council, number of members of the village council/village authority, mode of selection of the members of the village council, tenure of the village council/village authority. This has highlighted the concern of the respondents on the traditional local governance.

**Table 4.5 Respondents' Awareness: Generic profile of the TLC**

Sl. No	Village Council profile	Women Development		Total N=50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
1	Head of the village council/village authority			
	Headman	0 0.0	25 (100.0)	25 (50.0)
	Chairman	25 (100.0)	0 0.0	25 (50.0)
2	<b>Mode of selection of the head of the village council</b>			
	Elected	25 (100.0)	0 0.0	25 (50.0)
	Hereditary	0 0.0	25 (100.0)	25 (50.0)
3	<b>No. of members of the village council/Village Authority</b>			
	Unknown	1 (4.0)	0 0.0	1 (2.0)
	10 Members	24 (96.0)	0 0.0	24 (48.0)
	15 Members	0 0.0	25 (100.0)	25 (50.0)
4	<b>Mode of selection of the members of the village council</b>			
	Nominated	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
5	<b>Tenure of the village council/village authority</b>			
	3 Years	25 (100.0)	0 0.0	25 (50.0)
	3 Years	0 0.0	25 (100.0)	25 (50.0)

Source: Computed

Figures in parentheses are percentages



The data shows that the entire respondents from both the villages are aware of the village council/village authority. In the least developed village the head of the village council is the chairman which was confirmed by the entire respondents. Similarly the designation called headman as the head of the village council in the most developed village was confirmed by all the respondents.

The mode of selection of the head of the village council/village authority was aware by all of the respondents. The selection of the head of the village council i.e the chairman in the least developed village is through election. In this case, only male person who at present is the head of the household can cast their vote thus, the voting rights have been customarily denied to female regardless of their age. This is the customary practice of which continues in both of the villages. On the other hand, all the respondents belonging to the most developed village affirmed that the mode of selection of the head of village council is by nature hereditary. The position is inherited through father to son and following the patrilineal system of inheritance. Similarly, only male person who is the present head of household can cast their vote. Overall, the incidence is aware by all the respondents in both the villages.

The study attempted on the awareness of the composition of the village authority. There are 10 and 15 members in the least developing and most develop village respectively. The difference between the two villages in the number of the village council members is thus contingent upon the size of a clan and sub clan which is determined by the number of the households belonging to a particular clan. The data shows that majority (96%) of the respondents belonging to the least develop village aware the number of the village council member and another 4% did not aware on it. Also, the entire respondents belonging to most develop villages aware that the village council consisted of 15 members.

In regard to the mode of selection of the village council members in both the villages are in the form of nomination. The nominated candidates are selected out of the male members by ensuring representation from each of the clan. Thus, the female members are denied of the opportunity to be part of the village council authority by virtue of the gender. In both the villages, all the respondents are aware of the mode of selection of the village council members.

Finally, the duration of office of the village council was explored. The entire respondents have aware that the Tenure of the village council/village authority is for 3 (three) year duration and the elected members shall run the office. Similar procedure is applicable to both the villages.

### 4.3 Respondents' Awareness: Functions of TLC

It is not less important to assess awareness of the respondents on the functions of the traditional local council are represented in the Table 4.6, which is divided into seven categories comprising of maintaining of customary law: rules and regulations, tackling issues and problems, festivals, settlement, resource management, economic development and social justice, educational affairs, etc. Two possible optional responses were given as known and unknown for the respondents' choices.

**Table 4.6 Respondents' Awareness: Functions of TLC**

Sl. No	Functions of the TLC	Women Development		Total N=50
		Least Developed n=25	Most Developed n=25	
1	<b>Maintaining customary law: rules and regulation</b>			
	Known	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
	Unknown	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	<b>Tackling issues and problems</b>			
	Known	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
	Unknown	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3	<b>Festivals</b>			
	Known	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
	Unknown	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
4	<b>Settlement</b>			
	Known	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
	Unknown	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
5	<b>Resource management</b>			
	Unknown	0 0.0	1 (4.0)	1 (2.0)
	Known	25 (100.0)	24 (96.0)	49 (98.0)

<b>6</b>	<b>Economic development and social justice</b>			
	Known	25 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	50 (100.0)
	Unknown	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>7</b>	<b>Educational affairs</b>			
	Unknown	2 (8.0)	1 (4.0)	3 (6.0)
	Known	23 (92.0)	24 (96.0)	47 (94.0)

Source: Computed

Figures in parentheses are percentages

The entire respondents including from both the villages reported that, they know that maintaining of customary law: rules and regulations as one of the functions of TLC. It is important for being the primary focus of the TLC and the general behavior of women in the village is pronounced largely by the customary laws and practices.

The data shows that all the respondents are aware and know about the management of the affairs relating to tackling of issues and problems, festivals, settlement, economic development and social justice, etc. are the important functions of the TLC. The council act as the overall caretaker in tackling issues and problems that are faced by the community including land settlement distributions and regulations, festivals observed by the community, economic opportunities, and equal distributions of economic resources available in the community to ensure social justice in the society. All the respondents has respected and aware of the functioning of TLC.

The resource mobilization and resource management is another thrust area of the TLC. The resource management system indicated the sustainability of the village. All the respondents belonging to the least developed village know about the fact. However, in the most developed village majority (96%) of the respondents do aware and another 4% of the respondents are unaware of it.

The exploration on another function of TLC in managing the educational affairs shows that majority of the respondents from both the least developed village and most developed village know about the functioning of TLC on the educational matters, need for educational institution, need of management of the educational institutions, opportunities and fellowship towards education etc. However, a small portion of which 8% respondents in the least

developed village and 4% respondents belonging to the most developed village are unaware of the initiatives taken by TLC in the education affairs.

#### 4.4 Nature and Extent of the Respondents' participation in TLG

Participation of women in governance is virtually invisible although handful of women or an individual or two representing women's organizations may somehow be involved in decision making. However, there are no voluntary initiatives or activities of women involvement in decision making process. Table 4.7 represents the nature and extent of the respondents' participation in TLG. The level of participation, the extend of participation of the respondents on women participation in TLC was assessed by using 9 items viz. women don't participate in the village assembly decision making, women don't participate in clans meeting, women can raise their opinion only through women's organization, husband and wife discuss important village affairs, women have no voting rights, customarily women don't represent in village council, women convey their opinion through their husband, women do highly influence their husband in village decision making and women can participate in village assembly or decision making. The respondents were asked to scale according to what they practice and experience; following data are the outcome of the exploration.

**Table 4.7 Nature and Extent of the Respondents' participation in TLG**

Sl.No	Women's participation	Women Development				Total	
		Least Developed		Most Developed			
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Women don't participate in the village assembly decision making	3.6	0.8	3.4	1.2	3.5	1.0
2	Women don't participate in clans meeting	3.6	0.8	3.4	1.1	3.5	1.0
3	Women can raise their opinion only through women's organization	3.2	1.0	3.5	0.8	3.4	0.9
4	Husband and wife discuss important village affairs	3.0	1.2	3.2	1.1	3.1	1.1
5	Women have no voting rights	3.2	1.1	3.0	1.4	3.1	1.3
6	Customarily women don't represent in village council	2.8	1.5	3.2	1.4	3.0	1.4
7	Women convey their opinion through their husband	2.9	1.2	2.6	1.4	2.7	1.3

8	Women do highly influence their husband in village decision making	2.1	1.4	3.0	1.4	2.6	1.5
9	Women can participate in village assembly or decision making	2.2	1.4	2.4	1.4	2.3	1.4

**Source: Computed**

The practice in the TLG is reflected by the data and shows that the prevalence of non participation of women in village assembly and clans' meeting having the highest score with an equal mean of 3.5. It is inferential to say that women do not have the nature of direct participation either in village assembly or in the clans' decision making. Thus it is an important exploration to understand the context as participation of women in the highest decision making body in the local governance structure is of significant indicator of the status quo of women in governance. While, the respondents confirmed that women can collectively voice their opinions and views through organization with a mean score of 3.4. It was reported that women raised their collective opinions by delegating few organizational representative in the village assembly for the approval of their agendas. This implies the power dominance of male upon women in the society. On the other hand the respondents reported the presence of spousal communication with a mean score of 3.1 and that they discuss the village affairs with their husband's in spite of not having direct participation. In respects to voting rights of women a mean score of 3.1 agreed that women do not have their voting rights in the village council and which is not customarily granted by the society (3.0 mean score). Only the head of the household, legitimately the men are entitle to vote and can represent in the village decision making body. The other mode of women's participation is that they convey their opinions and views through discussion with their husbands with a 2.7 mean score. This is one of a prevalent practice among the respondents. Another important area in indicating the extend of women's participation is that the respondents are of the opinion that women's opinions and views on traditional local council governance are highly influential in village decision making even if they do not physically present in the decision making with 2.6 mean score. This incidence is substantiated by the elicited information during the FGDs. Most of the women participants asserted that the husbands used their (women) words and opinions in the village assembly for decision making. Thus, many women respondents had the least acceptance that women can participate in village assembly and village decision making with the lowest mean score of 2.3. This reflected the reality of their status in the traditional local governance showing the common practice of non-involvement of women in traditional local

governance. Overall, the table shows that there is no wide differences on the responses of the respondents on the above enquiries between the two villages of the least developed village and the most developed village clarifying that women does not participate in decision making in the governance as per the customary practice.

#### 4.5 Perception on Women’s participation in TLG

Diverse opinions and perceptions towards Women’s participation in traditional local governance were accounted during the key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions. People’s perception has an enormous impact upon the situation and condition of the society and vice versa. Therefore, it is significant to identify people’s perceptions on women’s participation in the traditional local governance if at all women is to be included in the system’s functioning. This exploration is an attempt to incorporate people’s opinion and the respondents’ view towards women’s participation in TLG. The general perceptions of the public are reported by the respondents using 9 items viz. women's active participation in TLG is important, strengthening system favorable for women's participation in TLG , women needs to participate in village assembly and clans decision making, reservation of seats, system of traditional local governance favors only men, women should also be given their voting rights, men are more capable to be in village council and women's active participation in the TLG is not important as their husbands already represented. The respondents’ score are represented in the following table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 Perception on Women’s participation in TLG**

Sl. No	Perception	Women Development				Total	
		Least Developed		Most Developed			
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Women's participation in TLG is important	4.3	4.2	2.6	1.4	3.4	3.2
2	Strengthening System favorable for women's participation in TLG	3.6	0.9	3.1	1.3	3.4	1.1
3	Women needs to participate in village assembly and clans decision making	3.3	1.0	3.0	1.4	3.1	1.2
4	Reservation of seats	3.2	1.2	2.8	1.2	3.0	1.2

5	System of traditional local governance favors only men	3.1	1.0	3.6	0.7	3.3	0.9
6	Women should also be given their voting rights	2.8	1.5	2.6	1.5	2.7	1.5
7	Men are more capable to be in village council	2.4	1.2	1.9	1.1	2.2	1.1
8	Women do not have the capacity/ability to be in village council	2.3	1.2	2.3	1.3	2.3	1.3
9	Women's active participation in the TLG is not important as their husbands already represented	1.8	1.0	1.6	0.9	1.7	1.0

**Source: Computed**

The data shows that most of the respondents reported that people are of the opinion that Women's active participation in TLG is important with 3.4 mean score with an equal mean score reflecting the perception that the tradition local system of governance need to be strengthened that must be favorable for women's participation in decision making. Following the perception, people are of the opinion that the present traditional local system of governance is less sensitive towards gender equality. Therefore, TLG represents only the interest of the male section in the society. Further, the data indicated that women need to actively participate in the village assembly as well as clans' decision making with 3.1 mean score. And, the need to ensure gender equality and promotion of gender responsive governance has been justified by quota system or reservation of seats for women that must be introduced even in the TLC system with 3.0 mean score.

On the other hand the opinion shows that the system of traditional local governance favors only men and not the women with an average mean score of 2.9. So, the system itself is not encouraging women participation and blocking to their involvement in TLC. Therefore, the preceding perception that women should also be given voting right in the TLC has an average mean score of 2.7 and which revealed the fundamental obligation, to ensure women' participation in the TLC governance. In addition to this, the people's perception also consisted of myths against women participation in TLC and some of the respondent had reported that Men are more capable to be in the traditional village council as compared to that of women with an average means score of 2.2. With similar attitude that under-estimated that Women do not have the capacity/ability to be in village council (2.3 mean score) that assumed that

women will not be able to handle the village affairs. Women are often affected by their mentality unfortunately accustomed to subjugation and subordination (see Guo, Zheng& Yang, 2009). This had been reaffirmed by the opinion that women’s active participation in TLG is not important and or required as their husband already represented (1.7 mean score). The differences on the average scoring between the two villages showed more or less the same in the above explored areas.

#### 4.6 Constraints to women’s participation in TLG

In addition to identifying the perceptions of people prevailing in the study area it is important to understand the challenges faced by women limiting them to participate in the TLC. The obstacles to women participation in the TLC are measured using 9 items viz. customary law, unfavorable governance system, inferiority complex amongst women, negative perception towards women, limited mobility, heavy traditional responsibility, lack of support from men, lack of confidence amongst women, lack of support from family members and lack education, knowledge, skills, etc.

Respondents within the two different study villages rated according to their perception on the constraining factors to active participation of women in traditional local governance. Table 4.9 represents the outcome of the respondents’ scoring.

**Table 4.9 Constraints to women’s participation in TLG**

Sl.No	Factors	Women Development				Total	
		Least Developed		Most Developed			
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Customary law	3.4	1.0	3.0	1.5	3.2	1.3
2	Unfavorable governance system	3.2	0.5	3.2	1.1	3.2	0.8
3	Inferiority Complex amongst women	3.2	0.9	2.2	1.2	2.7	1.2
4	Negative perception towards women	3.1	0.8	3.0	0.8	3.1	0.8
5	Limited mobility, heavy traditional responsibility	3.0	1.0	2.5	1.4	2.7	1.2
6	Lack of support from men	3.0	0.7	2.4	1.3	2.7	1.1
7	Lack of confidence amongst Women	2.9	0.9	2.4	1.2	2.7	1.1



<b>8</b>	Lack of support from family members	2.7	1.0	2.5	1.2	2.6	1.1
<b>9</b>	Lack education, knowledge, skills, etc.	2.4	1.2	1.8	0.9	2.1	1.1

Source: Computed

The constraining factors are discussed according to the rated average mean scores given by the respondents. The most common identified constraining factors by the respondents are equally distributed between the customary law and the unfavorable governance system with an average mean score of 3.2 followed by 3.1 mean scoring of negative perception towards women. Most of the respondents revealed that the male centered governance system devoid their participation in governance. It is normally the male section will take all major decision. The selection of representatives in governance is solely based on the clan system. Each respective clan will nominate their representatives according to the size or number of sub-clans. The size of a clan is determined on the basis of the number of the households. Customarily the head of the household or male member in the family legitimately represents in the clan decision making. Thus, this lineage of male headed tradition highly impacted on the affairs of governance. Another significant revelation during the interview stressed upon certain taboo associated to women. There are certain beliefs and practices linkage to traditional discrimination and prejudicing women folks in the social, religion and political realm. “Nei ya” is the derogative term implying impurity, defile, misfortune, etc. that referred to women. It was believed that if a woman touches any tools or implements used for hunting or for war, there will be no catch or they will be defeated during the war. Likewise if a woman walks by amongst the men’s discussion, it was believed as a bad omen. Such irrational beliefs and practices in the past tremendously impacted even in the present society. Women are considered incompatible and looked askance to be in the governance. The data also revealed the prevalence of inferiority complex amongst women, lack of confidence amongst women, lack of support from men and limited mobility, heavy traditional responsibility (with equal 2.7 mean score) that predominantly curtail women’s participation in TLG. These factors can be closely related to the traditional beliefs and assignment of roles and responsibilities. Women are highly accustomed to traditional subordination and oppressions. In another indications lack of support from family members and lack of education, knowledge, skills, etc. scored at 2.6 mean score and 2.1 mean score respectively.

## Free listing

Table 4.10, Table 4.11 and Table 4.12 represents the views and perceptions, perceived constraints and response to participation respectively of the respondents towards women's participation in traditional local governance. Total of 50 (fifty) respondents were interviewed at two different settings to establish how they believe and view their active participation in traditional local governance or in decision making, what are their perceived constraining factors to participation and how do they response if they are asked to represent in the local council?. Their opinions were accounted employing free listing method and rank them according to the accumulated response percentages.

### 4.7 Respondents' Perception towards women's participation in TLG

Table 4.10 represents the data of the respondents' perception and views on women's participation in traditional local governance (TLG). It is important to know about what women believe and how they view of their involvement in decision making to establish contextual cognition about the inclusive governance.

**Table 4.10 Respondents' Perception towards their participation in TLG**

Perception	Least Developed			Most developed			Total		
	(%)	Average Rank	Salience	(%)	Average Rank	Salience	(%)	Average Rank	Salience
It is a necessary political development	40	1	0.4	68.4	1	0.684	52.3	1.0	0.52
It is imperative for overall development	56	1	0.56	26.3	1	0.263	43.2	1.0	0.43
Responsibilities nurture women to be critical and responsive	28	2.71	0.133	36.8	2	0.211	31.8	2.4	0.17
Educated women have the capacity to govern	36	2.44	0.183	21.1	2.75	0.102	29.5	2.5	0.15
Towards equality of opportunity and gender justice	32	2.75	0.155	26.3	2.8	0.122	29.5	2.8	0.14
Men alone can't run the society efficiently	12	2.67	0.074	15.8	2	0.117	13.6	2.3	0.09
Better decision making	20	3	0.078	21.1	2.75	0.089	20.5	2.9	0.08

Promote gender sensitivity in governance	12	2.33	0.07	15.8	2	0.079	13.6	2.2	0.07
Women can act as complimentary agents	8	2.5	0.04	5.3	3	0.018	6.8	2.7	0.03
Women are the societal backbones	8	2.5	0.047				4.5	2.5	0.03
It is not necessary as women have different roles	4	1	0.04				2.3	1.0	0.02
Women's participation would strengthen traditional governance	4	2	0.02	5.3	2	0.026	4.5	2.0	0.02

Source: Computed

The data more than a half (52.3%) of the total respondents believed that women's participation in TLG is necessary to ensure political development and more than maximum of two-third (43.2%) of the overall respondents highly perceived that it is imperative to promote overall development. Nagaraja and Kusugal (2013) have made a similar comment in their study that active participation of women in local government can contribute to overall development of the community. This indicates the actual cognition of women of their situation that they do have high responsibility as men do. It is a collective responsibility to govern to promote overall progress and development of the society. FGDs amongst the male village leaders similarly affirmed to this perception. Similar finding was found in the previous study (see Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009). The data revealed that less than one-third (31.8%) respondents had the beliefs that, women's multiple responsibilities and roles nurture them to be sensitive and critically responsive. They further stated that there are certain matters best concerned to women and situation best understood by women. These diverse roles and responsibilities help women capable of planning and monitoring activities. Their experiential inputs in governance can contribute to greater successful and meaningful outcomes. In concerning about the capability and ability more than one-fourth (29.5%) of the total respondents argued that many women are educated enough to be able to handle the affairs of the governance. Similar argument was found in the previous study that, in the present context the Tangkhul women are well educated enough to earn and support themselves as much incoherent in the past (see Zimik, 2014). In fact majority of the council members have either without any educational qualification or just as qualified as women in general. Hence, the

major differencing factor seems to be about being men and women. In correlation to this more than one fourth (29.5%) respondents have the opinion that equality should be uphold to ensure gender justice. Therefore, equality and justice in governance can be ensured through promoting women's participation in decision making. In another assertion, about one-fifth (20.5%) of the total respondents perceived that women's participation in TLG can results better decision making. They can act as pacifying agents during conflicts in decision making. In times of any conflicts arises women have been playing significant roles in bringing amicable solutions since time immemorial in the Tangkhul society. Of the total respondents less than one-seventh (13.6%) respondents affirmed that promotion of gender sensitive governance is important because no men alone can run the society effectively. It was observed amongst the Tangkhul society that majority of the household activities are undertaken by women and without women's contribution a home is incomplete. Just as it is without women's contribution in governance the management will be ineffective. Thus, 6.8% of the total respondents confirmed that women can act as complementary agent to bridge the intellectual gap of managing the affairs of the governance. As interest and concern varies between men and women in governance (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). Another 4.5% of the total respondents asserted that women are the backbone of the society. This explains that without taking women's perspectives into consideration society cannot stand alone on the perspectives of men. Women are the soul of the society. Mean while some section of members in the society argued that allowing women in the governance is tantamount to social jettison of the unique customary law and practices which holds the cup of tribal identity. In contrary to this, 4.5% of the respondents contended to this view and conformed to the idea that women's participation in governance would rather strengthen the traditional system of governance. In another revelation, of the total respondents 2.3% respondents do not see the necessity of women's participation, they narrated that women have more significant roles to perform. They perceived that involving in decision making roles would exacerbate their already overburdened responsibilities that will lead to roles dysfunctional.

#### **4.8 Respondents' Perceived Constraints to their participation in TLG**

Table 4.11 represents various respondents' perceived constraints to women's participation in Traditional Local Governance. They were asked the reasons for their void involvement in decision making and absence of women representative in TLG. Women's participation in decision making process have been denied and ignored for some reasons.

Attempt have been made from the perspective of women to delve into potential factors that constrain their participation in the decision making body.

**Table 4.11 Respondents' Perceived Constraints to their participation in TLG**

Constraint	Least Developed			Most Developed			Total		
	%	Average Rank	Salience	%	Average Rank	Salience	%	Average Rank	Salience
Tradition and customary law	87.5	1.3	0.8	65.2	1.7	0.5	76.6	1.5	0.6
Inferiority complex amongst women	37.5	1.9	0.3	26.1	1.3	0.2	31.9	1.7	0.2
Multiple traditional roles and responsibilities	33.3	2.5	0.2	39.1	2.0	0.3	36.2	2.2	0.2
Inferiority perception towards women	25.0	2.0	0.2	26.1	1.5	0.2	25.5	1.8	0.2
Lack of knowledge, skills and capacity among women	29.2	2.4	0.2	21.7	1.6	0.2	25.5	2.1	0.2
Lack of encouragement and cooperation from men	8.3	1.5	0.1	8.7	2.0	0.0	8.5	1.8	0.1
Lack of commitment from women	4.2	2.0	0.0	4.3	1.0	0.0	4.3	1.5	0.0
Insecurity amongst men				8.3	3.5	0.0	4.3	3.5	0.0

Source: Computed

The analysis revealed 8 (eight) significant factors that hampers their involvement in decision making and to represent themselves in the village council as a member. The factors are traditional and customary law, inferiority complex amongst women, multiple traditional roles and responsibilities, inferiority perception towards women, lack of knowledge, skills and capacity among women, lack of encouragement and cooperation from men, lack of commitment from women and Insecurity amongst men. These data are elaborated on the basis of the total scored average percentage in descending order.

### **Tradition and Customary law**

The Tangkhul Naga society has a long standing tradition and customary law that enjoins the behavior and characteristics of the society. This tradition and customary have been tested and seasoned since time immemorial that it has been practicing long before the inception of modern political theories. Traditionally the Naga polity in general can be characterized into two different forms viz. republic and monarchy forms of government

(Nshoga, 2009). The Tangkhul Naga in particular customarily follows monarchical system of governance by adopting the principle of democracy. The Tangkhul village is governed under the leadership of a chief along with the council of elder (Hangva). The headman or chieftainship is hereditary but not autocrat in nature. Theoretically the head of the clan was the permanent member of the village council however, in practice someone will be nominated from each clan but depending on the size of the clan the number of representative will be decided to be member of the council. The village council comprises of the representative from each clan (Nshoga, 2009.pp.120-125; Shimray, 2001.pp159-163; Shimray, 2000.p.61; Ruivah, 1993.p.149).

The exploration revealed that similar patterned of governance were found in both the least developed village and most developed village except the different selection system of the head of the village council in the case of the least developed village. In another words the least developed village follows the chairmanship system of governance which is to be elected not hereditary. Otherwise, the member representatives are to be someone nominated by the clan members to be in the village council. The data shows that more than three-fourth (76.6%) of the total respondents fervently emphasized upon their lack of participation in TLG as the undesirable consequences of the uncompromising tradition and customary law (see Kurebwa, 2014; Wang & Dai, 2013). Of the total respondents majority (85.5%) respondents from the least developed village and less than two-third (65.5%) respondents from the most developed village argued that there is no viable provision under customary law to accept women's involvement in decision making equally with men. It will be seen unusual in the eyes of tradition for a woman to represent in the village council. They further refuted that the male dominance nature of traditional system relegates women as second citizens and thus, it circumscribes them to grant a space in the local council. In conjoining to this factor the respondents remarked various technical difficulties as such that the system is exercised on the basis of male centered lineage or otherwise patrilineal. This particular implication upon the governance was corroborated with significant information elicited during the key informants interview (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). As per the customary practices the size of member composition of the village council depends on the number and size of the clans whereby the size of the clans is determined by the number of sub-clans which is composed by the number of household belonging to a particular clan. At the clan level the rightful representative is the head of the household legitimately the father or son or any legitimate male member of the family. Hence, by way of customary norms women are invisible and

neglected enough to remain dormant spectators of the governance. Traditionally only male members present during the village assembly which is the highest decision making body and it is evident that all the village council members in both the study villages are male representatives.

### **Multiple traditional roles and responsibilities**

The Tangkhul women play inimitable multiple roles and responsibilities and occupy highly significant social status in the society (Horam, 1988; Shimray, 2001; Vitso, 2003; Zimik, 2014). It is infallible to state that they are the major back bone of the society. Their never ending domestic chores, livelihood and allied activities and other social responsibilities demand maximum of their time. The data shows that, one-third (36.2%) of the total respondents asserted that their multiple roles and responsibilities limited them to involve in governance. Such implication was found in previous studies too. (see Kurebwa, 2014; Nagaraja & Kusugal, 2013; Wang & Dai, 2013; Weinberger & Jutting, 2001). The difficulty in balancing between domestic/personal responsibilities and other social responsibilities result in refraining themselves from participation in governance. The respondents of two-sixth (33.3%) from the least developed village and the respondents of more than two-sixth (39.1%) from the most developed village affirmed that their hectic domestic chores curtail involvement in various public affairs. They further stated that most of the household chores are under their shoulders and overburden by other livelihood activities. Of these respondents most of them are engaging in agricultural activities and throughout the year they had to be involved in seasonal agricultural activities with other farming activities for their source of income. The respondents stated that women have more responsibilities and workloads even in the agricultural sphere. They responded without any hesitation that only if the men folks assist in women's responsibilities that will consequence in furthering more women involvement in public affairs and in governance for that matter. The respondents accounted that the nature of roles and responsibilities assigned to them strictly based on the traditional gender centered classifications. This further contributed to the over burdened women's roles and responsibilities as most of the men shy away to assist the traditionally defined roles as women's roles. Therefore, many women comprehended that if they leave their responsibilities for other public affairs as in involvement in governance, will hollow their home affairs that may lead to social dysfunctional.

### **Inferiority complex amongst women**

The mentality of considering women being inferior to men is of commonly prevalence perception amongst women. One of the causal factors in developing collective inferior mentality amongst women is the impacts of customary and traditional practices, that they are highly influenced by such practices instrumental in subordination and exclusion of women in the society. Women undoubtedly, accustom to such oppression and dependent on male supremacy. Such findings were also accounted in several similar studies (see Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009; Kurebwa, 2014; Wang & Dai, 2013). The data accounted that less than one-third (31.9%) of the total respondents felt constrained due to the lack of confidence amongst themselves. Many felt that men will not listen to them just because they are women. Some of the respondents sternly rejected the idea of involving in decision making process and represent in the local council asserting that they are more efficient confining to their own traditional roles and responsibilities. Most of the respondents would observe that they do not have the quality and courage to stand amongst the men. When they were asked if they would be willing to become a member of the local council, most of their responses would be negative. Even those who affirmed to become a member would only be willing if only other women are involved. This vividly revealed that many of them still have the dependency mindset that they are still lacking self confidence within themselves. Moreover, at the other extreme end some of the respondents quipped, “What can I do? I am just a woman so what difference could I make?” This corroborated with the mental state of feeling weaker and lesser amongst the women. Of the total respondents more than two-sixth (37.5%) respondents are from the least developed village against more than one-fourth (26.1%) respondents from the most developed village.

### **Inferiority perception towards women**

The influence of traditional practices and beliefs on the status quo of women’s participation in TLG is highly considerable. It does not only affect the mentality and attitudes of women but significantly upon the mentality and perception of men in the society. The analysis revealed that slightly more than one-fourth (25.5%) of the total respondents argued that they were looked down by the male section in the society. Similar issue was highlighted by Kalita & Baruah (2015). Of these, the respondents composed of one-fourth (25%) belonged to the least developed village and more than one-fourth (26%) respondents were from the most developed village. The respondents lamented over the existing daunting double standard mentality amongst men in the society. They recounted how unfortunately in the past



women were treated as inferior and as second citizens in the society and yet what is more dismayed to observe but the still prevailing mentality amongst men. Most of the respondents refuted that woman are equally a human as men. There are times women can do greater works than men. They slammed regretfully that men can't be what they are without women, therefore considering women as lesser being consequence only to shame and futility. On the other hand during the key informant interviews some men commented that it will be such ludicrous fact to be led by women and further term it as 'dishonorable' reality. They stated that women have different roles and responsibilities in contrast to that of men. This indicated that man is a superior being and must not take a command from woman. Therefore women are expected to listen to men and not vice versa.

### **Lack of knowledge, skills and capacity amongst women**

Traditionally women have been kept aloof from the involvement in the decision making body. Men became the sole actor in the affairs of the Traditional Local Governance in the Tangkhul society. The exploration on this subject shed a new light whereby slightly more than one-fourth (25.5%) of the total respondents apprehended that due to the lack of knowledge, skills and capacity amongst women constrained to participate in decision making body. This was confirmed by more than two-seventh (29.2%) respondents from the least developed village and more than one-fifth (21.7%) respondents from the most developed village. To be involved in governance, one requires possessing certain qualities and skills and to exacerbate the condition these women have never been shouldered any responsibilities in decision making body. This fueled apprehensive psychosis amongst the respondents that selectively refrain from making any effort to participate in governance. Many amongst the respondents on the other hand argued that unlike in the past women at present are educated and capable to handle affairs in governance. But when they are asked whether they would be willing to become a member of the village council, most of them succumbed to their own apprehensive perception by saying that they don't have the knowledge, skills and capacity to be involved in decision making body.

### **Lack of encouragement and cooperation from men**

Of the total respondents, only 8.5% respondents comprising the respondents of 8.3% from the least developed village and the respondents of 8.7% from the most developed village argued that there is no encouragement and cooperation from men towards women's participation in TLG. Nagaraj and Kusugal encountered the similar finding in their study in line with the present result (also see Kaul & Sahni, 2009). The respondents stated that in the

midst of rejection and non cooperation from men, they do not want to create any discomfort in the community by claiming their position in the local council. Therefore, this make women to stay away from the decision making process. Some of the respondents had the opinion that if the men in the community recognize them as equal citizen and realize the importance of women's contribution; they are willing to work for the development of the community.

#### **Lack of commitment from women**

Respondents comprising of 4.2% from the least developed village and 4.3% of respondents from the most developed village which accounted up to total respondents of 4.3% who comprehended the situation of women's constraining participation in TLG is due to lack of commitment from women. They lamented saying that most women often blame men for not welcoming them to be a member in the village council but verily women are not determined and committed to be in the governance. Many of them commented good things about women's participation and complain about issues relating to it. However, for the actual achievement of the concept least individuals are willing to advocate and commit to towards bringing a change.

#### **Insecurity amongst men**

A total of 4.3% respondents which comprised of 8.3% respondents from the most developed village but none of the respondents from the least developed village asserted that prevalence of insecurity feeling amongst men prevented women's participation in governance. They justified that the increasing educational status of women and their gaining momentum in different spheres of life create insecurity amongst men. This indicated that men's dominant proclivity over women found to be common. The respondents observed that most of the men were apprehensive over the possible power degradation or subversion of customary system. During the key informant interviews some of the men anticipated that women could do far better than men in various aspects of life in this present generation. Therefore it would be unfortunate that time may arrive where men become dependent on women in the matters of governance. This is illative that men still could not accept women to be in the governance as equal to men.

#### **4.9 Respondents' willingness to participate in TLG**

Table 4.12 represents the accumulated data of the respondent's willingness to participate in Traditional Local Governance. The respondents were interviewed to enquire into their willingness to become a member of the village council to establish the actual facet of women's interest in the governance. Most of the respondents contrasted their responses in

willingness to become a member of the village council. Majority of the respondents have the positive perception towards women's participation in decision making body as it has been indicated in the above table 4. 10. However, in an astonishing revelation it is not in coherent to what they actually response towards calling.

**Table 4.12 Respondents' willingness to participate in TLG**

Response	Least Developed			Most Developed			Total		
	%	Average Rank	Salience	%	Average Rank	Salience	%	Average Rank	Salience
Unwilling	50	1	0.50	59.1	1	0.59	54.5	1	0.55
Willing	18.2	1	0.18	27.3	1	0.27	22.7	1	0.23
Willing But I Am Too Old	9.1	1	0.09				4.5	1	0.05
Willing But No Time	4.5	1	0.05	4.5	1	0.05	4.5	1	0.05
Unwilling And Not My Responsibility	9.1	1	0.09				4.5	1	0.05
Unwilling Due To Lack Of Education	4.5	1	0.05				2.3	1	0.02
Willing But Men Will Not Listen				4.5	1	0.05	2.3	1	0.02

Source: Computed

The data revealed disheartening factual context of the Tangkhul women in governance. Although majority of the respondents advocated active participation of women in decision making body they are not pragmatically ready to participate. Of the overall accounted responses more than a half (54.5%) of the total respondents is unwilling to participate in the TLG. Of which a half (50%) respondents are from the least developed village and comparatively greater number of more than a half (59.1%) respondents are from the most developed village that denied becoming a member of the village council. Out of the entire respondents only two-ninth (22.7%) respondents are willing to take up the responsibility in decision making body. This inclusive of more than one-sixth (18.2%) respondents from the least developed village and respondents of more than two-eighth (27.3%)

are from the most developed village. The data represents comparatively lesser of just two-ninth (22.7%) respondents who are willing to become a member in village council with that of more than a half (54.5%) respondents who are unwilling to become a member in village council. The data vividly indicated a critical daunting reality towards promoting women's participation in the decision making body. Unless the women section denied involving in a matter concerning them, it is difficult to advocate and sought changes of the existing situation. Progressive change should not be expected from without but it needs to be achieved within through collective efforts. In another case, there are group respondents who are willing to shoulder the responsibilities of the village authority however they are reluctant due to their personal limitations. This can be seen in three main different conditions. In the first case, respondents constituted of 4.5% responded that they were willing to be a member of the village council but they felt that they are too old to bear the responsibilities. With the entire 9.1% of such respondents belongs to the least developed village. Similarly in the second case, there are those respondents which make up to 4.5% with 9.1% of respondents from the least developed village positively responded but refused due to time constrains. They stated that their heavy domestic workloads and other socially expected responsibilities limited their mobility and service contribution. Women carry The third condition revealed that the respondents of 4.5% from the most developed village that make up to just 2.3% of the total respondents contended their willingness but reluctant to confirm becoming a member of the village council. The reason being limited them assured men will not listen to their voice. They argued that the mentality of men in general towards women still holds in a very negative way. Men consciously or unconsciously treated inferior or prejudice women especially in the matters relating to decision making power. This advocates the need to improve the mentality of men towards women and endorse in the principle of equality and recognition. On the other hand the analysis reveals that some sections of the respondents are but unwilling to take up the responsibility as a member of the council. They argued that it is not their responsibility to be in the village council. Some refuted that such idea is a mere imitation of the foreign culture therefore it can only degrade the unique culture of the Tangkhul society instead of bringing progressive change and development. The respondents observed that without understanding the real context and situation imposing of foreign ideas pose a serious threat to the existing unique culture. Of the total 9.1% respondents which composed of 4.5% respondents from the least developed village contain to such ideas. In another case, 4.5% of the total respondents; that composed of 2.3% respondents from the least developed village asserted unwillingness to

become a member of the village council. They expressed that their lack of educational qualification discouraged them. This corroborates that a person's educational qualification can boost one's confidence and improves capacity and ability to undertake action. However in contrary the data reveals that the respondents educational status does not have significance influence on the nature of their response to become a member of the village council. Maximum of the respondents from the most developed village acquire better education however, it is accounted with higher percentage of responds for unwilling to become a member in the village council.

#### **4.10 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

Key Informant Interviews were conducted to elicit information on the status quo of women's participation in the traditional local governance. A total of 12 (twelve) key informants comprised of village headmen, chairman, village councilors, society leaders, clan elders and head, etc. were interviewed at different phase and venue. A face-to-face interview technique was adopted for the study purpose. Each informant was interviewed for duration of 30-45 minutes. The interviews were conducted on the basis of the following guided questions:-

1. The existing system of Traditional Local governance Functions, composition, mode of selection (nomination)
2. Opinion on the condition of women in the traditional local governance
3. Significant roles do women play in functioning of the traditional local governance?
4. Views and Opinions on women's participation in the local governance?
5. Perceived obstacles to women's participation in the local governance?

The solicited information were descriptively coded and crossed examined at the end of each interview. The elicited information are categorized into four main themes as: system of traditional local governance, the status quo of women in traditional local governance, perception towards women's participation in traditional local governance and the obstacles to women's participation in traditional local governance.

##### **4.10.1 System of Traditional Local Governance**

The Tangkhul in general still follows monarchical-democratic system of village governance. The investigator was informed that the whole villages of the Tangkhuls have uniform customary law that standardized the traditional governance system.

The governance system in the least developed village is different from that of the most developed village. The interviews revealed significantly two prong administrative systems

that exist in the study villages. Firstly: in the most developed village the head of the village council is the village chief/king where the kingship is hereditary in nature and the rest of the councilors comprised of the head of a clan or nominated male member from a clan. Normatively the village council comprises of the hereditary heads/leaders of the existing clans. The number of the nominated male representatives in the council depends on the number and size of the clans whereby the size of the clans is determined by the number of sub-clans which is composed by the number of household belonging to a particular clan. Secondly: in the least developed village the head of the village council is the elected male as a chairman. In the chairmanship kind of administrative system the head of the village council should be an elected or nominated one. It can be any bona fide male member of the village eligible to hold the chair of chairmanship. However in case the process of selecting village councilors is otherwise the same as in the kingship administrative system. Every head of the household which has been registered under Hill house tax is entitled to be a member of the village assembly. The village assembly which is the highest decision making body will organize all the programs and plans and decide all the major issues. In simple words, the Tangkhul society follows patriarchal and patrilineal system of governance.

#### **4.10.2 The status quo of women in Traditional Local Governance**

The interviews revealed the daunting fact of the existing condition of women in governance. It was learned that in both the villages there never have been women representatives in the village council. Moreover, women usually do not even attend the village assembly let alone participating. Similarly, when ever any discussions or decisions are necessary to be arrived within a clan, women are void in such occasion. The affairs of women in the society are separately handled by the women under their patron organization. Any resolution or agenda brought forward should be approved by the village assembly and during the period of agenda approval few women representatives usually the office bearers are expected to attend in the village assembly. In a rare case if any woman attends such meeting they are expected to keep silent during the deliberation. In the yester years it was considered an ignominy to men and the society as a whole if any woman speaks up amongst the male councils and in exacerbation even the presence of women was an infamy. The belief was that the presence of women and their misbehavior in the presence of men would bring misfortune in the society. The explanation of women keeping themselves away in the village assembly and clans meeting can be inferred to such olden day beliefs and practices in the society. On the other hand, the social roles and responsibilities of the Tangkhul women are enormously

inimitable and stand on the status as high as men in the society. Indubitably, without the roles and sacrifices of women the conditional stability of the Tangkhul society would not be possible. One of the unique roles of the Tangkhul women is peacemaking in times of conflict. The Tangkhul women with their “Charme<sup>1</sup>”; a traditional torch represent the utmost power of peace over any worse conflict situation. There were several incidences when men lost their hope and ingenuity to resolve conflict, only the intervention by the women could reach an amicable solution. In another expression the Tangkhul women are granted with certain right that is not available with men. The role of “Phukreila<sup>2</sup>” is so unique to its own that the practice have been existed since long before the inception of modern concept of the UN peace keeping force. The “Pukhreila” are those women who married to the men from other community or tribe or clan for that matter. In case any conflict arises between the two communities or tribes or clans, the “Pukhreila” will act as a pacifying agent in such a ramification where intervention is required to prevent exacerbation of the situation and to curtail further lost of life. No respective communities or tribes or clans could denounce their endeavor for peace. Such is the authority granted to women in the Tangkhul tribe in particular and Naga community as a whole. Despite their unique roles and acumen, the participation and representative of women in the traditional local governance is still invisible and pristinely untouched.

#### **4.10.3 The Perception towards women’s participation in Traditional Local Governance**

Inclusion of women in traditional local governance was observed necessary and therefore important to promote women’s participation and representatives in the village council. Majority of the key informants adjudged women’s participation in decision making as an imperative attribute to over all development. They further asserted that women carry enormous responsibilities and roles at micro level aspects of live that alluded to the characteristics of macro level aspects of live. Moreover their hectic workloads nurture them becoming critical and sensitive towards situations. On the other hand women can understand better in certain matters that are closely concern to them and more efficiently they can manage the affairs as compared to men. This is illative towards collective efforts in matters appertain to good governance that may yield better outcome for the society. Meanwhile some of the male informants held the idea that the opinion of inducting women in the village council

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<sup>1</sup> A traditional torch made of bamboo stake that contains oil and rope.

<sup>2</sup> A women who married to another clan or community commission as an inter-mediator or pacifier in time of any conflict arises between the two communities.

cannot soon be materialized due to rigid customary law. Some were hesitant to support the idea of women's participation and representative in village council. They were apprehensive to change the old comfortable system which had already been upon their favor. The feeling of insecurity upon the probability of losing their control over the society was observed to be the reason of their reluctance. Mixture of opinions and perceptions over the issue of women's participation in governance was accounted. Some section of the informants though concurred to the idea of women's participation; they found it hard to accept women to take up the role in village council as a representative. Women's participation in the decision making bodies such as village assembly and clans meeting was seen as an advantage for the society. However, the crux contention is the issue of women's representation in the village council from the customary perspective as whereas the unkempt public mentality. Appertain to women's representation in the village council not only the male sections were askance about it but there were asymmetric discord from the female section as well. Therefore it is inferential of the fact that the crux complicity attain to women's representation in the village council.

#### **4.10.4 The obstacles to women's participation in Traditional Local Governance**

The impact of the old age practice and the existing stringent customary law limited women's participation in decision making process. The Tangkhul women are accustomed to traditional exclusions and subjugations in the matter of governance. When elicited the reasons of women's void of participation in governance, the informants strongly affirmed to the traditional practices. The women informants reiterated that women have been accustom to the old ways and practices. They have been inscribed with the thought that it is not their responsibility or something illicit to do. Another significant observation was the prevalent of inferiority complex amongst women coupled the obstacles by the men's perception of women being inferior and impure. A significant revelation during the interview stressed upon certain taboo associated to women. There are certain beliefs and practices linkage to traditional discrimination and prejudicing women folks in the social, religion and political realm. "<sup>3</sup>Nei ya" is the derogative term implying impurity, defile, misfortune, etc. that referred to women. It was believed that if a woman touches any tools or implements used for hunting or for war, there will be no catch or they will be defeated during the war. Likewise if a woman walks by amongst the men's discussion, it was believed as a bad omen. Such irrational beliefs and practices in the past tremendously impacted even in the present society. Women are considered incompatible and looked askance to be in the governance. This resulted into two

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<sup>3</sup> Nei ya is a Tangkhul derogative vernacular referring to infamy, ignominy and unclean or impure.



dimensional limitations that hampered women's participation in the traditional local governance. In appurtenance to these factors lack of confidence due to inadequate education and skills and lack of mobility due to having multiple roles and responsibilities limited women's participation in traditional local governance. There were some women informants who expressed that the men do not accept and welcome them in the village assembly or clans meeting for that matter. They in daunting voice elucidated the manner of how men looked and treated women in the village assembly by sneering and commented in an insulting tone as "what business do you women have to speak up?" "Do you have no other better work to do at home?" "This is not your responsibility?" "What a gibberish talk?" etc.

#### **4.11 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

Focus group discussions were conducted amongst different community groups in the least developed village and most developed village. The variances of groups are the village councilors, church leaders and women leaders. The number of participants ranging from 8 to 12 participated in the guided group discussions. The focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted for the duration of 25 to 30 minutes, which were instructed on the basis of the two major guiding components.

Guidelines:

(a). Opinion and Perception towards women's participation and representation in the traditional local governance.

(b). Major obstacles that limited women's participation in the traditional local governance.

Before the discussions began a brief introduction of the investigator was given followed by short briefing on the intended subject to be studied. After which the informed consents were obtained from the participants. The expected end results of the investigation were highlighted to the participants in lieu of gaining better understanding on the purpose of discussion. The outcomes of the FGDs are categorized into two major categories.

##### **4.11.1 Women's Participation in the Traditional Local governance**

The Tangkhul Naga women hold considerably very high social status as compared to the rest of India. Some of the participants contended that Tangkhul women enjoy certain rights and opportunities over men. In contradictory to this the political condition of women is but a dismal. There never was and have been any women village councilor in both the least developed village and most developed village. Many participants conceded to the idea of giving space to women in decision making process but in the mean time indecisive about women's representation in the village council. Some of the participants refuted that the

custom has better advantage than just conforming to the recently emerged ideology. Further some asserted that women were not neglected even though they might not be provided with the same space as men do. They corroborated that concerning major issues and agendas women are being consulted before the arrival of any such final decisions. The concept of inclusive discussion between husband and wife postulated that women are not ignored. Thus, women do involve in the decision making process indirectly but more influentially to man. Therefore, some countered that active participation do not guarantee better solution but what matters is the possibility to convey ideas in any manner. Some women participants substantiated this view that even if they might not directly involved in the decision making process however, the final decision often arrived on the basis of their views and opinions. Some of the statement inferred by women participants are quoted in conjunct to this “we discussed and shared our views with our husbands and they (husbands) spoke our words in the village assembly”. This revealed that women do not completely feel rejected or ignored in the community decision making. On the other hand most women supported the idea of their active participation in the decision making body but in a similar case they induced insecure response towards representing in the village council.

#### **4.11.2 The Obstacles to women’s participation in the Traditional Local Governance**

The main constraint that limited women’s participation attributed to the customary system of traditional local governance. The existing traditional system is unfriendly and unfavorable for active women’s participation and representation in the village council. The entire structure is mechanized upon patriarchal footstool. There is no doubt that women play significant roles and responsibilities but it just not appear at the fore front of the social structure and mainly in the political structure. There are other factors but secondarily influence upon the political status of women. Those secondary factors like inferiority complex amongst women, men’s double standard attitude towards women, lack of women’s immobility, lack of men’s cooperation towards women’s political participation, etc. the limits women’s participation are the produce of the traditional, cultural superstructures. Otherwise, for instance the educational qualification and capability of women in the present context is significantly as comparable to men. Therefore it is induced that such constraining factors are secondary in nature.

#### **4.12 Summary**

The elicited information from key informants interviews (KIIs) and focus Group Discussions (FGDs) vividly revealed that the existing system of governance in both the sample villages is highly conformed to the customary system of governance. It is monarchical-democratic in nature. Although in the least developed village they adopt republic form of governance but it conforms to the formal system of governance.

Although, women play significant roles in society and claim to have a high status, the condition of women's participation in critical decision making process and village council is at dismal. There is no provision for women to involve in decision making body. Indirect involvement through their husbands and male member of the family is a common prevalent mechanism of women in decision making. Delegation of women representatives of their organization in seeking their agendas approval was strongly stressed during KIIs and FGDs.

Majority of the participants and informants held the idea that women's participation is necessary and important to promote good governance. However, the representation is of women in the village council is an issue of contention that attributes so much of insecure and complexity. It is because of the fact that the entire system may need to reconstruct and rearrange to accommodate women in the village council.

Many viewed that the main obstacle to women's participation is the rigid traditional system of governance which is a primary and core limiting factor complicated by the conservative mindset. Other factors thus are secondary in nature that the main obstacle being removed shall disappear without complicacy.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study aims to explore the status quo of women's participation in the traditional local governance in Tangkhul Naga community. The study adopted mixed approaches i.e. qualitative and quantitative methods to collect both primary data and secondary data. The quantitative data were collected through administration of semi-structured interview schedule simultaneously with qualitative information through key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The results of analysis of data and discussions have been presented in the preceding chapter. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to summarize the results of analysis of data and discussions. They are categorized into three main sections. The first section is devoted to the consolidated findings of the study whereas the second section presents the conclusions. In the third and final section the implication of the study for policy, social work practice and the scope for further research are presented.

#### **5.1 Major findings**

The results of the analysis of data and discussions are summarized in four sub-sections. The first sub-section presents the demographic, familial, social and economic profile of the respondents. The second sub-section addresses the findings in regards to the institutional framework and the status quo of women's participation in governance. In the third sub-section, the summarized findings appurtenant to the perception of the Tangkhul women towards their participation in traditional local governance are presented. The findings appertain to perceived constraints of the Tangkhul women towards their participation in the traditional local governance are discussed in the fourth sub-section.

##### **5.1.1 Structural bases of respondents**

The demographic structural characteristics which comprised of the age group, educational status and marital status of the respondents are discussed in this sub-section. In this study, the analysis revealed that maximum of more than a half of the entire respondents were at the age group of young adult (30-39 years) belonging to both the least developed village and most developed village. While the minimum constituent of the entire respondents

were at the age group of very old (above 80 years) that strictly belonging to the least developed village.

In regards to the educational status of the respondents, maximum number of more than one third (34%) of the entire respondents had attained higher secondary school leaving certificate (HSSLC), of which majority of the respondents belonged to the most developed village. While, the minimum proportion of 4% of the total respondents had completed post graduation. On the other hand, of the entire respondents belonging to the least developed village maximum of more than one third (36%) of them had completed high school leaving certificate and none of the respondents were found to have studied beyond higher secondary level of education. Another significant note of the study dictated that a high proportion of less than one fourth (20%) of the respondents that belonging to the least developed village were illiterate however none of the respondents belonging to the most developed village were found to be illiterate.

The marital status of the respondents depicted that maximum of less than three fourth (70%) of the entire respondents were married. The proportion of married respondents in the least developed village was higher as compared to the most developed village with slightly more than three fourth (76%) and slightly less than two third (64%) respectively. Further the study assumed that the educational status played an important role in deciding the age of marriage. There were few respondents less than 10% minimally accounted as widow belonging to both the least developed village and most developed village.

The family structural characteristics of the respondents were discussed on the basis of the type of family, size of family and gender of the head of household. The type of family consisted of nuclear family, joint family and extended family. The study depicted that majority of the respondents were living in nuclear type of family. On the other hand, a minimal constituent of below 10% of the entire respondents were belonging to joint family and extended family. This signified the important nature of polarized family structure and independency amongst the respondents. In addition concerning the size of family of the respondents the study depicted that more than half (58%) of the entire respondents were having a medium size (4-6) family. Further, a maximum of 94% of the respondents household were headed by male except in the marginal case of 6% of the respondents' female headed households.

The social structural characteristics of the respondents such as ethnicity, tribe, religion and denomination were explored to reflect the social affinity of the respondents. The result depicted that the entire respondents belonged to the tribe of Tangkhul, Naga ethnicity. In regards to religion, the entire respondents affiliated to Christianity. However, they were divided into two denominations. Between these two denominations, Baptists were found to be the majority while the Roman Catholics were found in minimal proportion.

The economic structural characteristics of the respondents were explored which consisted of occupations and annual income. The occupations of the respondents were examined on the basis of seven (7) categories. Amongst these categories, a maximum of more than a half (56%) of the entire respondents were cultivator of which majority (80%) of them belonging to the least developed village. This was followed by respondents' occupation with one seventh (14%) and 8% of them as home maker and govt. employee respectively. Meanwhile, a minimum proportion of respondents were private employee and self-employed for living. In another case, few respondents did not state their occupations. The pattern on the annual income of the respondents depicted that the maximum of slightly more than one third (34%) of the entire respondents were having an income of ₹40001-₹60000 annually. In another case, the higher proportion of respondents whose annual income was below ₹40000 belonged to the least developed village. Notably, there were no respondents with income of ₹100001 - ₹120000 and ₹120001 & above per annum that belonged to the least developed village.

### **5.1.2 Institutional framework and nature of women's participation.**

The Tangkhul traditional local governance system is an ages old system that has been practicing since time immemorial. Its structure is solely governed by the traditional customary law that is systematically mechanized in line with patrilineal characteristics. In both the least developed village and the most developed village the local governing body was composed of only male representatives from the clans. However, pattern of selecting the head of the village council was found slightly different between the two villages. In the least developed village the republican or the chairmanship system of governance is being followed that the chairman as the head of the council who had to be an elected one. It is worth mentioning that only the male member of the community; normatively the head of the household is eligible to cast a vote. Whereas in the case of the most developed village the form of governance is monarchy

or headmanship/chieftainship, that the hereditary headman is the permanent head of the village council in nature. Otherwise the practice and pattern of selection of member representatives from the clans through the process of nomination is the same as in both the villages. The size of member composition of the village council depends on the number and size of the clans whereby the size of the clans is determined by the number of sub-clans which is composed by the number of household belonging to a particular clan. The whole system or procedure is fully governed by the dictate of customary law.

In regards to the examination on the nature and status quo of women's participation in local governance, the study found that despite the indication of high level of women awareness on the structure and affairs of the local council, they were invisible in the local decision making body as in village assembly, clans meeting and village council. The only channel by which women accessed to the affairs of the local governance was through their husbands. Otherwise, in the matters relating to the affairs of women had to delegate representative; normally the office bearers who would seek agendas approval from the male dominant local decision making body. The results of the analysis of the data depicted predominant prevalence of undesirable traditional implications upon the status quo of women's participation in local governance.

### **5.1.3 Perceptions of women towards their participation in local governance.**

The study indicated positive linkage between the results of the analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative information. In pertaining to perceptions of women, notably more than half of the respondents viewed women's participation in local governance as important and imperative in promoting over all development. They believed that inclusion of women in local council would ensure strengthening of traditional system of local governance. On the other hand, women strongly refuted that the existing system of governance favors only men. Therefore, favorable provision needs to be created to enable women's participation in the local governance. Most of the respondents perceived that nowadays women are educated enough to be able to handle the affairs of the governance. Also, they asserted that equal opportunity and gender justice must be ensured in the society. No society can run by men alone just as family is incomplete without women. Thus, women are the backbone of the society. Meanwhile, there were some minimal proportion of respondents opined that women's participation in local governance would overburden them therefore inefficient and

unproductive. Thus, women would best performed efficiently with their already heavy laden roles and responsibilities.

#### **5.1.4 Perceived constraints towards women's participation in local governance.**

In this sub-section the summarized findings on the perceived constraints that limit women's participation in traditional local governance are presented. They were organized in a descending manner on the basis of total scored average percentage as below.

##### **Tradition and Customary law**

The maximum of more than four-fifth (87.5%) and nearly two-third (65.2%) of respondents from the least developed village and most developed village respectively adjudicated that the existing system of governance is the system co-terminus with customary law provided no space for women involvement in decision making body. They further refuted that the male dominance nature of traditional system relegates women as second citizens and thus, it circumscribes them to grant a space in the local council. In conjoining to this factor the respondents remarked various technical difficulties as such that the system is exercised on the basis of male centered lineage or otherwise patrilineal.

##### **Multiple traditional roles and responsibilities**

The examination revealed that diverse roles and responsibilities of women posed as one of the major challenges faced by women. Their never ending domestic chores, livelihood and allied activities and other social responsibilities demand maximum of their time. The difficulty in balancing between domestic/personal responsibilities and other social responsibilities result in refraining themselves from participation in governance. The respondents further accounted that the nature of roles and responsibilities assigned to them strictly based on the traditional gender centered classifications.

##### **Inferiority complex amongst women**

The mentality of considering women being inferior to men is of commonly prevalence perception amongst women. One of the causal factors in developing collective inferior mentality amongst women is the impacts of customary and traditional practices, that they are highly influenced by such practices instrumental in subordination and exclusion of women in the society. Women undoubtedly, accustom to such oppression and dependent on male supremacy. At the extreme end some of the respondents quipped, "What can I do? I am just a



woman so what difference could I make?” This corroborated with the mental state of feeling weaker and lesser amongst the women.

### **Inferiority perception towards women**

Most of the respondents argued that they were looked down by the male section in the society. They recounted how unfortunately in the past women were treated as inferior and as second citizens in the society and yet what is more dismayed to observe but still the prevailing mentality amongst men. On the other hand during the key informant interviews some men commented that it will be such ludicrous fact to be led by women and further term it as ‘dishonorable’ reality. They stated that women have different roles and responsibilities in contrast to that of men. This indicated that man is a superior being and must not take a command from woman. Therefore women are expected to listen to men and not vice versa. Thus it was found that the influence of traditional practices and beliefs on the status quo of women’s participation in TLG is highly considerable. It does not only affect the mentality and attitudes of women but significantly upon the mentality and perception of men in the society as well.

### **Lack of knowledge, skills and capacity amongst women**

The analysis depicted two significant indicators in regards to this factor constraining women’s participation in the local governance. Firstly, some of the respondents adjudicated that traditionally women have been kept aloof from the involvement in the decision making body. To be involved in governance, one requires possessing certain qualities and skills and to exacerbate the condition they asserted that they have never been shouldered any responsibilities in decision making body. Therefore, they believed they lack in skills and capacities to handle the affairs of governance. Secondly, other section of the respondents argued that unlike in the past women at present are educated and capable to handle affairs in governance. But when they are asked whether they would be willing to become a member of the village council, most of them succumbed to their own apprehensive perception by saying that they don’t have the knowledge, skills and capacity to be involved in decision making body.

### **Lack of encouragement and cooperation from men**

It is important to note that less than 10% of the entire respondents argued that lack of encouragement and cooperation from men is one of the prevalent constraining factors towards

their participation in local governance. Discrimination on the basis of socially construct gender classification highly influenced upon the condition of women's participation in governance. This constraining factor conjoined with the inferiority perceptions of men towards women. Therefore, the implication depicted dearth of encouragement and cooperation from men that hampered women's involvement in decision making body.

#### **Lack of commitment from women**

The study depicted existing complicacy amongst the women themselves. Despite, having adhered to positive perceptions towards women's participation in local governance, women commitment and determination were found significantly invisible. There was no collective attempt and assertion in creating ambience that would be favorable for women's participation in governance. Thus, this had been reflected negatively upon the promotion of women's participation in governance.

#### **Insecurity amongst men**

The fear of losing powers and control over the affairs of governance developed apprehensive and insecure feelings amongst men reflected upon the condition of women participation in governance. Some of the respondents adjudicated that this feeling of insecurity amongst men acted as one of the deadlocks in opening up the opportunity for women to participate in decision making body. Further, they asserted that men honestly could not accept the fact of women's participation in governance. During the focus group discussions it was observed that some men were askance about this idea of women's participation in governance.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

In conclusion, the exploration on the prevailing political condition of women as in local governance of the Tangkhul community shed deeper understanding on the condition of women in politics. As several research works (Conway, 2000; McGlen & O'Connor, 1998; Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern 1997; Fowler, 1993; Rinehart, 1992) highlighted by Conway (2001) adopted different theoretical approaches viz. legal/institutional, sociological, psychological, rational choice and political process to explain pattern of participation and reasons of low participation in governance. These theoretical approaches are found relevant in correlation to the findings of the present study to explain the status quo of women's participation in traditional local governance. The contributions of the Tangkhul Women and

involvement in decision making process are asymmetrically established to their perceived high social status. The relevant explanation in regards to low status of women in decision making thus, attributed to tradition, cultural norms and social norms. What was more dismal to learn the fact, that despite knowing the importance of women's participation in decision making, the people in general failed to even pursue in bringing improvement on the condition of women in governance. The rigidity of custom hardens the mentality of people ever. Preserving and protecting of cultural sanctity must continue but in doing so it should not deny the essence of an individual. Change is imperative and must ensure overall development and progress. Strengthening of culture and tradition as in system of governance can be achieved only when equality and recognition of women are granted in the society.

The analysis revealed positive reflection and perceptions in regards to women's participation in local decision making body. However, in regards to women's representation in village council the data depicted contrary situation. Maximum of more than half (54.5%) of the entire respondents were not willing to become a member in village council. This has come to the conclusion that women representation could not be possible unless women committed themselves to participation in village assembly or clans meeting. However, it will come to realization of the orthodoxy of women's participation in decision making and governing body without the collective effort involving both men and women in the society. It thus Lalneihzovi (2012) rightly concluded that the issues appertain to women's political participation are not the issues to be dealt with by the women alone.

### **5.3 Suggestions**

- ❖ Provision and situation must be created to ensure women's participation having the long term objectives towards promoting women's representation in village council.
- ❖ Promoting women's participation in local decision making body requires having situation that would improve their confidence and sense of responsibility. It should strengthen the traditional system of local governance that fits with the present context.
- ❖ Sensitization amongst male population for women's participation in the local governance.
- ❖ Collective and mutual efforts from both men and women should be given. Without the support of men and commitment from women it will not be able to yield positive result.

- ❖ Formulation of policy and strategies to ensure women's participation and representative in local council should reflect enthusiasm amongst women therefore higher efficiency and productivity.
- ❖ Promotion of women's participation should be base on the context of the society, imposition and imitation of foreign practice should be avoided.
- ❖ Change must occur from within not without.

#### **Social work intervention**

- ❖ Extensive effort to sensitize and promote capacity building amongst women needs to be done.
- ❖ Intensive and extensive consultation with the stake holders and apex organizations to develop strategies and measures to promote women's participation in decision making.
- ❖ Social workers can play tremendous roles in the field of advocacy.
- ❖ Social worker can also play a role as mobiliser and facilitator to sensitize and in bringing public understanding about the orthodoxy of women's participation.

#### **For further research**

- ❖ Comparative examination from both the perspective of men and women would enable to reflect different dimensions on the situation of women in governance that may help in formulation of new strategies to strengthen the local governing body
- ❖ The studies can extent to other tribal community incorporating bigger sample size.

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**WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TRADITIONAL LOCAL  
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**ABSTRACT**

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**ABSTRACT**

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## **Introduction**

The present study seeks to explore the status quo of women's participation and representation in traditional local governance. Attempt has been made to highlight the existing traditional system of governance. It delved into the nature and extent of rural women's engagement in decision making process. The study thus, contributed to the enhancement of the existing gender related knowledge and accentuated the prevalent women's perceptions and attitudes towards their participation and the governance system practices amongst the Nagas in general and the Tangkhul community of Ukhrul district in particular. Having kept the traditional system at base in tandem with the contemporary scenario of gender equality and equal participation in governance this study looked into the various constraining factors and challenges faced by women towards active participation in traditional village council.

The development of a society or a nation depends on the how its available resources are utilized to the maximum outputs. The most powerful and valuable resources of a society or a nation is its human resource. Any societies which can transform its maximum population into human resource run at the higher developmental path. However the issue lies within the imbalance utilization of maximum population as human resource. Albeit, women compose half or more of the nation's total population, their opportunities and roles in contributing towards national development are often deprived. Therefore, the concept like women empowerment and development and women emancipation thus emerged (Kalita & Baruah, 2015).

In the yester era society expected and assigned women to secondary role; a daughter, sister, mother, daughter-in-law, good housewife, home maker, submissive and obedient child bearer, servant or maid, etc. Women were shunned from socio- political realm of the nation. They were not welcomed and subjected to all sort of exploitations; economically, socially and politically and total exclusion from the governance. In this present generation we often speak of the achievements made nationally as whereas internationally. Mention can be made of the Universal Declaration of Human rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Constitution of India- The preamble, the Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, the 73<sup>rd</sup>, 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment and several other provisions instrumental for tackling issues related to women. Nevertheless, the condition of women around the world in general and India in particular still stands below desirable atmosphere. In the one claim modern industrialized society, still stands a high toll upon discrimination, subjugation, exploitation, marginalization, etc. of women in different

forms. One might view human society in general from the gender telescopic lenses or sex roles defined social microscopic lenses. What might be shocked to observe in the societal laboratory could be the fact that women are oppressed, subjugated, discriminated, alienated, exploited, marginalized, etc in the society on the basis of sex, gender or races virus that infested the sanctity of equality, respect, recognition and protection. John Stuart Mill (as cited in Kumari, 2006) cogently adjudicated about it when he said that the progress of a country can be judged by its socio-economic condition and political status of women, as women occupy important places in the family in particular and society in general.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the phenomena of women's struggle across the globe took a drastic turn. The least concern political condition of women drew the attention of scholars that opened the eyes of law makers and blind public. Women's participation in governance was predominantly deliberated since the first wave of feminist movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Different feminist schools of thought attempt to explain the nature of subordination and suppression of women. Women emancipation movement gained attention from many scholars and activists around the world.

John Rawls concept of "Justice as Fairness" and "the wave of participatory democracy" (Chakrabarty et. al, 2004) have impacted tremendously in the political notion of democracy that undergone a paradigm shift. Attempts were made around the world to recognize the weaker and marginalized sections including women in a society. Forbes (1998) commented that such attempt to empower women was made more pragmatic when UN declared International year of women in 1975.

In the cycle of developmental wave of women empowerment around the world, India had to wake from its long slumber indifference gesture towards women's issues. The Constitution of India guarantees all citizen equality in all the spheres of social, economic, political, etc. life. Albeit unfortunately the patriarchal ridden societal systems makes women difficult to enjoy the rights as men do. Special measures must be taken to empower and uplift the condition and status of women in India. The year of 1990s brought about changes and development drastically in many aspects for the nation. Mention can be made one amongst many of those, the Constitutional Amendment of 1992 which is also known as the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional (Amendment) Act dawn a new ray of hope for women in politics (Chakrabarty et.al, 2004; Nandita, 2013). Under this provision one-third of the seats in municipality should be reserved exclusively for women. The creation of Panchayati Raj Institution or rather can be

termed as decentralization of power provides several opportunities for women's participation in governance.

The north eastern region constitutes about 8% of India's size with approximately 40 million of the total population of India (Census 2011). It is a home for tribal as being one of the highest regions of concentration of tribal. This region is marked as one of the conflict infested areas of the country. Every tribe is very protective and conscious about their culture and identity that ramify through exercise of their autonomy having authority over their lives. Historically, since the British era any form of activities that would sense as an encroachment over their rights was sternly revolted. Therefore, in order to pacify the situation and to enable them to live in their own way the British treated them with different administrative parameters. Tribal areas were classified as "excluded" and "Partially Excluded" under the Government of India Act 1935. However, the Act of 1935 did not grant local self governance political autonomy. After the independence in 1952 this was replaced by what is known as sixth schedule with the intention to provide protection of tribal areas and interest by allowing local self governance through constitutional institutions at district or regional level. These institutions are responsible for protecting tribal culture and customs and to carry out developmental tasks.

The Naga polity in tradition or system of local governance can be of two types viz. republic and monarchy forms of government (Nshoga,2009).The Tangkhul Naga customarily follows monarchical system of governance by adopting the principle of democracy. Every village is independent in the affairs of governance. The Tangkhul village is governed under the leadership of a chief along with the council of elder (Hangva). The headman or chieftainship is hereditary but not autocrat in nature. Theoretically the head of the clan was the permanent member of the village council however, in practice someone will be nominated from each clan but depending on the size of the clan the number of representative will be decided to be member of the council. The village council comprises of the representative from each clan (Nshoga, 2009,pp.120-125; Shimray, 2001,pp159-163; Shimray, 2000,p.61; Ruivah, 1993,p.149). Vitso (2003) argued that women in Naga society are highly influenced by the customary way of practices. Undeniably in certain aspects women are granted invariably high social status and occupy significant social position. They play inimitable roles and responsibility unlike in other parts of the Indian society (Shimray, 2001; Horam, 1988; Zimik, 2014). But in contrary to the high social status of the Tangkhul women their participation in the village council is still invisible till today. Zimik (2014) argued that the

Tangkhul women in present context unlike in the past are educated and can earn to support themselves. However, they are relegated as second citizens with no preference given to them in the aspect of local council. The traditional attitudes greatly influence to grant a space for them in local governance.

### **Overview of Literature**

The existing literature accentuated increasing attention on women and governance from researchers and policy makers as a “highly significant issues on grounds of both equity and improving the performance of governance” (Minoletti, 2014). Several studies on women and governance are found in global, national and local contexts.

#### **Global context**

Voluminous study relating to women and governance dominated significant space in the world of research based literature. *Women’s participation and representation in governance* was examined by many researchers from various perspectives in different countries (Kurebwa, 2014; Panday & Li, 2014; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Guo, Zheng & Yang, 2009; Mobido, 1995; Pandey, 1990)

The studies in regards to women’s political participation: the constraining factors and enabling factors to women’s participation have been conducted to understand the factors that affect women’s participation in politics (Adesanya (2014); Minoletti, 2014; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Wang & Dai, 2013; True et. al, 2012; (Pape, 2008); Howell, 2006; Weinberger & Jutting, 2001; Conway, 2001; Skalnes et. al, n.d.)

Another studies in relating to the present research context is on the attitude and perception of people towards gender roles and women’s participation in governance (Alim, 2009; Bowen, Wu, Hwang, & Scherer, 2007)

The issues on women’s empowerment and their participation in governance in the globalised context were also discussed in different studies (Rezazadeh, 2011; Gray, Kittilson, & Sandholtz, 2006; Fernando, 1997)

#### **National context**

Many literatures have been evidently indicated the numerous researches work in India that concern about women and governance. Such studies included “*The power of political voice: Women’s political representation and Crime in India*” (Iyer et. al, 2012), in their attempt substantial relationship between the documented crimes against women and Women’s political representation in the governance have been noted. More reported crimes against women were documented since the introduction of quotas system in the governance

for disadvantaged groups that mandate political representation; this changed which the authors argued as good news for women's empowerment. Political representation provided room for disadvantaged groups raise their voice ( Iyer et. al, 2012).

*“Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India”* is an experimental study conducted at 265 village councils in west Bengal and Rajasthan. In these villages one third of the village council head is being reserved for a woman; meaning only women could be elected to the position of village head in the reserved council. The researchers compared the types of public good provided in the reserved and unreserved village councils. The result revealed the relationship between the public goods provided with the reservation of the council seat; that the types of investment made on the basis of their own gender needs (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004).

*“Opportunities and Challenges of women's political participation in India: A synthesis of research findings from select district of India”*, this research was undertaken under the UN Women's Programme titled 'Promoting Women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia' conducted by International center for Research on Women (ICRW). It focused on the grassroot level of the three UN Women's programme districts; Alwar district of Rajasthan, Mysore district of Karnataka and Gajapat district of Odisha. The main objective of this research was to understand where Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIs) acted as gender responsive institutions, where issues related to gender were raised and discussed. It examined the factors influencing on the deliberation of gender issues with special focused on domestic violence. The study finding was based on information collected through survey of around 3000 Gram Panchayat members inclusive of men and women and quantitative data was collected from Sarpanches, member of Panchayat samiti and Zilla parishad supplemented by other stakeholder in three selected districts (UN, n.d.).

A study on the *“Dynamics of Local Governance in Karnataka”* was conducted to have an empirical accentuation on the coming of Panchayati raj institutions in consideration with the Informal local governance. With the introduction of Panchayati raj Institutions people often ignore the significant role played by other informal local institutions like caste panchayats, street panchayats and customary village councils. The author once again brought the importance implication made by these customary village councils (CVCs) into limelight and opined that these institutions have not been marginalized by the formal elected bodies. On contrary the author found out that CVCs actively continue to function and have strong



interactive relations with the formal institutions influencing in a positive as well as negative way (Ananthpur, 2007).

Authors like (Nandita, 2013; Kaul & Sahni, 2009; Chakrabarty et. al, 2004; Bhan & Raj, 2001; Roy, 1999; Forbes, 1998) examined the participation of women in decision making process from different perspectives.

Several attempts have been made on the issue of Empowerment of women through political participation in india (Singh, 2015; Pankaj and Tankha, 2010)

### **Regional or Local context**

Many research based studies have been done on the issues of women and the customary practices; its implication on the life of women, status of women and their roles, etc.

“*Customary Inheritance practices and women amongst the Kabui Naga of Manipur*” in this study Kamei attempted to explore the customary land-inheritance system from the gender perspective to highlight the situation of women under this institutional set up (2011).

A study on “*Social Status and the role of Naga Women in the Traditional Naga Society*” was conducted in attempt to explore the traditional practices of the Tangkhul women in the past and tried to give meaning in the present society by examining their status and roles. The author highlighted that women occupy significant position by enjoying specific rights and obligations, however in respect to administration and decision making process no women are allowed to participate unless in the form of indirect participation by influencing their husband or brother or son (zimik, 2015).

The same author in her other study titled “*Naga women as peace Maker In war and Conflict Situation (Yesterday And Today)*” further attempted to examine the inimitable responsibility taken by Naga women in times of war and conflicts. She highlighted certain special power exercised by women in time of conflicts. Such prerogative power which never could be found amongst men was given to Naga women that they act as peace makers (zimik, 2014).

Vitso (2003) in her study titled “*Customary Law and Women: The Chakhesang Nagas*”, revealed that women are considered weaker and subordinate to men. The customary law highly influenced upon the status of women. Yet comparatively women do enjoy certain substantial position in the society.

The author of *“Gender Relations and the web of Traditions in North east India”* aimed to deal with gender relation within the perspective of Traditional, custom and practices (Buongpui, 2013).

Attempt were being made to examine the north eastern regions’ status of women in a comparative manner with the rest of India average in the study Titled *“Status of Women: north Eastern Region of India versus India”* (Das, 2013).

Several studies from different perspective towards women empowerment and women’s participation in governance have been attempted to highlight the condition of women and to promote overall development in regards to women in northeast India (Lalchatuanthangi, 2016; Bhattacharya & Roy, 2015; Das, 2015; Kalita & Baruah, 2015; Lalneihzovi, 2012)

### **Research gap**

Internationally and nationally women in governance has been a contemporary concern and addressed by different mechanisms. The lack of women’s participation in the decision making process have been questioned to improve and promote the status of women. In spite of the fact, the initiatives mainly focus on the political participation of women and countable attempt have been made to explain on why women are neglected in decision making process and representation in the local governance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In spite of women having high social status and enormous roles and responsibilities played by women in the Tangkhul society no space is provided in the traditional local governance. The absence of women’s participation in the local governance have been highlighted and questioned continuously by many scholars but no such empirical explanation is given to the inquiry as to why women are neglected and virtually refrained from participation in the local governance. The determinant factors and perceptions related to women’s participation in governance have never been examined. However, the general public has been speculating that the deceptive mentality ought to be the sabotage issue for the promotion of gender responsive governance. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the constraining factors to women’s participation, related perceptions and attitudes of women relating to participation and representation in the local governance. Finally, it is important to probe the possible measures that will enable women’s participation in the local governance without compromising the long standing customary system of governance of the Tangkhul Naga of Manipur.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is the existing condition of women in the Tangkhul traditional local governance?
2. How the traditional cultural practices do acts as challenges, constraints and opportunities for women's participation in the local governance?
3. What are the existing related perceptions amongst the women towards their participation in the local governance?
4. What form of decision making process or governance is influential for women's participation

## **Objectives**

1. To understand the traditional local governance system among the Tangkhuls in rural Ukhrul, Manipur.
2. To probe into the nature and extent of the Tangkhul women's participation in the traditional local governance.
3. To understand the perceptions of the Tangkhul women on their participation in the traditional local governance.
4. To understand the constraints to women's participation in the traditional local governance.
5. To suggest measures for social work intervention towards promotion of women's participation and gender responsive traditional local governance.

## **Methodology**

### **The Setting: Profile of the study area**

The setting of the present study elaborates profiles of the state of Manipur and Ukhrul district: block and the selected two sample villages.

### **The state of Manipur**

The state of Manipur which is also known as the land of jewels lies at the latitude of 23.83\*N and 25.68\*N and at longitude of 93.03\*E and 94.78\*E, occupying the total area of 22,327 sq km. As per the 2011 census, Manipur has the total population of 2,721,756. Its total literacy rate stands at 76.94% which comprises of male literacy rate with 83.58% and female literacy rate stands at 70.26%. Manipur is surrounded by Nagaland in the north, Mizoram in the south and Assam in the west as well as Myanmar in the east. The Manipur state can be geographically divided into hill region and valley region. The hill region composes of five districts viz. Senapati, Tangmenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel and Ukhrul districts whereas valley region comprises of four districts viz. Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and

Bishnupur districts. Thus, the hill districts occupy 90 percent (20089) sq km) of the total area of the state and the remaining 10 percent (2238 sq km) of the total area of the state is being occupied by the valley region.

### **Ukhrul District**

Ukhrul District in the north east of Manipur is at present inhabited by the Tangkhuls and a handful of other tribes consisting of Kukis and Meiteis. It is located at 25.12\*N-94.37\*E covering the total area of 4544 sq km. According to 2011 census it has the total population of 1,83,115 and the average literacy rate is 81.35%. Out of which 85.52% comprised of male and 76.95% comprised of female. During the period of British-India in 1919 Ukhrul district was initially marked out as sub-division but later upgraded to a district in 1968. Its maiden area covered 8200 sq km until it sliced and Tengnoupal now known as Chandel district was carved out on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1983. Since then the so called present Ukhrul district came into existence in 1983. The district has now seven (7) sub-divisions that coterminous with the eight (8) developmental blocks.

The Naga people are the inhabitants of the north eastern parts of India and north western Burma now Myanmar. Naga people are a conglomeration of multiple tribes settling across north eastern states of India viz. Nagaland, parts of Manipur, Arunachal as whereas in the north western parts of Sagiang province of Myanmar consisting of five townships viz. Layshi, Lahe, Nanyun, Hkamti, Homalin, etc. and in Kachin states. There are about different sixty-six (66) tribes of Nagas sharing common culture, custom, religious beliefs, etc. They belonged to Mongoloid race, speaking various distinct Tibeto-Burman languages (Zimik, 2015).

The Tangkhul tribe is one of the major tribes of Naga settling in the areas lying between latitude 25.5\*N -25.41\*N and longitude 94\*E-95\*E in the north eastern part of India extending across the north western part of Myanmar. The Tangkhul country is being demarcated by the international boundary of India and Myanmar that sliced away some parts to the east. Greater portion which remain in India are found in Manipur Ukhrul district. Some Tangkhul villages are also merged to present district of Senapati. On the other hand the Tangkhul villages which merged to present Myanmar are found along the Pansa and Somra tract in the north, Samshok Thaugthut state in the south and in the east connecting to Kachin (, *Shimray, 2000, pp. 2-3, 2001,p.32*).

## **Profile of the Sample Villages**

The sample villages are categorized into two categories on the basis of the status of female literacy rate namely:- the least developed village and the most developed village. Sihai khunou village has the total literacy rate of 51.51% with 43.88% of female literacy rate as per the 2011 census. It is the village having the lowest female literacy rate amongst the villages under Ukhrul central subdivision. Therefore it, has been categorized as the least developed village for the study purpose. On the other hand, Shirui Aze (Chingkha) has the total literacy rate of 95.49% with 92.65% of female literacy rate as per the 2011 census which appeared to be the village having the highest female literacy rate under Ukhrul central subdivision. Therefore, it has been categorized as the most developed village for the study purpose.

### **Shirui Village**

Shirui village is located in the northern part of Ukhrul in Ukhrul district, Manipur. It is 15 kilometers away from the Ukhrul district, headquarter. The village is surrounded by Ukhrul in the west, Langdang village in the south, Mapum village in the east while Shihai village in the north east with Lunghar in the north. Shirui is bestowed with bountiful flora and popularly recognized for its rare 'Lilium mackliniae' found on Shirui kashong or Shirui peak. The National Highway 150 Imphal-Kohima via Jessami passes through the village. The village is divided into two parts vis. Shirui Ato (Chingthak) and Shirui Aze (Chingkha) however, it is under one single traditional administration system headed by hereditary headmen. The Shirui dialect used by the local inhabitants belongs to Tibeto-Burman Language Family. Agriculture has been the primary occupation of the Shirui inhabitants. Majority of them upholds Christianity as their religion.

It is recorded that the Shirui Ato (Chingthak) has 100 households with the total population of 472 which consist of 296 male and 176 female as per the 2011 census. It has the literacy rate of 90.31% with male literacy rate stands at 93.02% against 86.06% female literacy rate.

Meanwhile Shirui Aze (Chingkha) has 184 households recorded with the total population of 793, of which 393 are female and male make up to 400. Its literacy rate stands to 95.49% out of which male literacy make up to 98.27% while female literacy rate stands to 92.65%.

### **Sihai Khunou Village**

The term Sihai refers to a group of villages: Sihai Khullen, Shihai Khunou and Shihai kahaophung that are located in the north of Ukhrul district headquarter, Manipur. Sihai

Khullen is distanced about 37 kilometers from Ukhrul that connects partially by National Highway 150 Imphal-Kohima via Jessami. While Sihai khunou is approximately an hour travelled by motor from Sihai khullen Village. Historically, it is narrated that the term Sihai derives from the word 'Saanhee' meaning 'Cow's Jewel' in local dialect or 'Sei-hai' in Tangkhul lingua franca. The term 'Saanhee' later came to know as 'Sihai' as the outsiders could not pronounce the local dialect. The origin of the word traced back during the period of migration and settlement. According to a legend a cow was slaughtered as sacrifice to appease their god(s) in commemorating the occasion of the settlement and found a Jewel in cow's bowel. As per the Hill House Counting 2014 the total number of households in Sihai khunou village is 181, and holding the total population of 372 of which 194 are male with 178 are female as per the 2011 Census. The total literacy rate of the village according to 2011 stands to 51.51%. Of which the male literacy rate stands to 58.13% and female literacy rate stands to 43.88%. The primary occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture.

## **Research Design**

This study is cross sectional in nature and exploratory in design. It is based on the primary data collected through semi-structured interview schedule. The sampling frame consists of rural women from the selected two villages while the sample units are women at the age of above 18. The primary data is supplemented with secondary data collected from official records of the Tangkhul traditional organizations. Moreover, Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) are conducted to acquire better understanding of the community context and the system of governance.

## **Sampling**

The study adopted multistage sampling procedure to select the town, block and villages based on the available literacy level. Ukhrul centre subdivision/block was selected purposively on the basis of highest literacy status of women out of the existing eight (8) developmental blocks. Further two villages were selected for the study which has least educational status and most educational status from the chosen block. Population of the study composed of women living in semi urban villages. Non-Probability - Convenience sampling methods was employed to select respondents from the determined villages. A total of 50 respondents were interviewed, of these constituted 25 respondents each from the two selected village.

## **Tools of Data collection**

Semi-structured interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) are used for data collection. Quantitative data were collected simultaneously with qualitative data by using semi-structured interview schedule. The study comprised three main sources of qualitative information to enable reliable in-depth analysis; that is semi-structured interviews at individual level, guided discussions with variances of community groups and interview with key informants comprised of community leaders and elders. All together 12 KIIs and 5 FGDs were conducted within the two villages to elicit information that would shed light in understanding the context.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

The quantitative data collected through field survey was processed through MsXcel and analyzed with the help of SPSS software. Simple averages, percentages and proportions, were used to analyze the data. Free listing was conducted and the analysis was done by using Antropac software.

## **Concepts and Definitions**

### **Traditional**

According to *Merriam-Webster* traditional means:-

1. (a) an inherited established, or customary pattern of thought, action or behavior (as a religion practice or a social custom)  
(b) a belief or story or a body of beliefs or stories relating to the past that are commonly accepted as historical thought not verified.
2. The handing down of information beliefs and custom by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction.
3. Cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs and institutions
4. Characteristic manner, method, or style.

According to *Cambridge dictionary*:

It refers to a belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of these belief, etc. in a particular society or group.

### **Traditional Structure**

It refers to informal institutions that do not derive their existence from the constitution of the states or the formal institutions, but are developed and nurtured by the people. They are rooted in traditional or indigenous history, tradition and culture. In another words traditional

or indigenous structures are usually informal having rooted to a long historic meaning of the past, tradition and culture (Lutz & Linder, 2004; Olowu & Erero, 1996)

### **Participation/political participation**

Rowe and Frewer viewed public participation/participation at a general level “*as the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development*” (2004).

Kuhn defined participatory development as “*the partaking of a maximum of concerned social and political actors in identifying, designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development activities including control and decision-making over the allocation of financial resources*” (1998, p. 11).

Kumari viewed ‘participation’ as an organized effort of groups or individuals in a given social situation to enhance control over resources and management of institutions. In other words it is a voluntary effort of an individuals or groups in contributing for the progress of programs and overall national development. Thus, in general political participation was stated as those members’ voluntary activities in a society contributing to formulation of public policy and selection of leaders or rulers (2006. Chapter 3).

### **Governance**

*World Bank* defined governance as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources. Three distinct aspects are identified:- (i) the form of political regime (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economy and social resources for development; and (iii) the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.

*UNDP* viewed as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, process and institutions through which citizen and group articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.

*International Institute of Administrative Science* refers governance as the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life and economic and social development. Governance is a broader notion than government. Governance involves interaction between these formal institutions and those of civil society.



## **Traditional Governance/Local Governance**

Hye (2002) viewed local government system as an institution at par with the other formal organ of state. In the local governance like central government authority perform various levels of functions (agriculture, health, education, road development, etc). Having the better proximity with the people, the local government can have a better impact of the services and developmental activities. Thus, opined the local government institutions involvement in various ways viz: (a) Program, project formulation and implementation (b) Educational institutions, hospital and other government aid programs (c) tackling in removing various social evil and (d) Better accountability and transparency can be maintained.

“Local Governance comprises of a set of institutions, mechanisms and process through which citizen and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations at the local level. It requires partnership between local governmental institutions, civil society organizations and private sector for participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable service delivery and local development. It necessitates empowering local governments with authority and resources and building their capacity to function as participatory institutions that are responsive and accountable to the concerns to function as participatory institutions that are responsive and accountable to the concerns and needs of all citizens. At the same time, it is concerned with strengthening of grass roots democracy and empowering citizens, communities and their organizations such as CBOs and NGOs to participate as equal partners in local governance and local development process”. (UNDP)

### **3.2.5 Operational Definitions**

- ❖ *Women's Participation* refers to voluntary or involuntary activities or efforts or involvement of the Tangkhul women in decision making process to contribute to policy making and overall societal development.
- ❖ *Traditional Local Governance* is the system of the Tangkhul village governance conforms to its customary law.
- ❖ *Governance* refers to the process of decision making in the affairs pertaining to social, economic and political of the village.
- ❖ *Tradition* refers to the tradition of the Tangkhul Naga tribe.
- ❖

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the exploration on the prevailing political condition of women as in local governance of the Tangkhul community shed deeper understanding on the condition of women in politics. As several research works (Conway, 2000; McGlen & O'Connor, 1998; Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern 1997; Fowler, 1993; Rinehart, 1992) highlighted by Conway (2001) adopted different theoretical approaches viz. legal/institutional, sociological, psychological, rational choice and political process to explain pattern of participation and reasons of low participation in governance. These theoretical approaches are found relevant in correlation to the findings of the present study to explain the status quo of women's participation in traditional local governance. The contributions of the Tangkhul Women and involvement in decision making process are asymmetrically established to their perceived high social status. The relevant explanation in regards to low status of women in decision making thus, attributed to tradition, cultural norms and social norms. What was more dismal to learn the fact, that despite knowing the importance of women's participation in decision making, the people in general failed to even pursue in bringing improvement on the condition of women in governance. The rigidity of custom hardens the mentality of people ever. Preserving and protecting of cultural sanctity must continue but in doing so it should not deny the essence of an individual. Change is imperative and must ensure overall development and progress. Strengthening of culture and tradition as in system of governance can be achieved only when equality and recognition of women are granted in the society.

The analysis revealed positive reflection and perceptions in regards to women's participation in local decision making body. However, in regards to women's representation in village council the data depicted contrary situation. Maximum of more than half (54.5%) of the entire respondents were not willing to become a member in village council. This has come to the conclusion that women representation could not be possible unless women committed themselves to participation in village assembly or clans meeting. However, it will come to realization of the orthodoxy of women's participation in decision making and governing body without the collective effort involving both men and women in the society. It thus Lalneihzovi (2012) rightly concluded that the issues appertain to women's political participation are not the issues to be dealt with by the women alone. The major findings of the study are highlighted as below

## **Structural bases of respondents**

The demographic structural characteristics which comprised of the age group, educational status and marital status of the respondents are discussed in this sub-section. In this study, the analysis revealed that maximum of more than a half of the entire respondents were at the age group of young adult (30-39 years) belonging to both the least developed village and most developed village. While the minimum constituent of the entire respondents were at the age group of very old (above 80 years) that strictly belonging to the least developed village.

In regards to the educational status of the respondents, maximum number of more than one third (34%) of the entire respondents had attained higher secondary school leaving certificate (HSSLC), of which majority of the respondents belonged to the most developed village. While, the minimum proportion of 4% of the total respondents had completed post graduation. On the other hand, of the entire respondents belonging to the least developed village maximum of more than one third (36%) of them had completed high school leaving certificate and none of the respondents were found to have studied beyond higher secondary level of education. Another significant note of the study dictated that a high proportion of less than one fourth (20%) of the respondents that belonging to the least developed village were illiterate however none of the respondents belonging to the most developed village were found to be illiterate.

The marital status of the respondents depicted that maximum of less than three fourth (70%) of the entire respondents were married. The proportion of married respondents in the least developed village was higher as compared to the most developed village with slightly more than three fourth (76%) and slightly less than two third (64%) respectively. Further the study assumed that the educational status played an important role in deciding the age of marriage. There were few respondents less than 10% minimally accounted as widow belonging to both the least developed village and most developed village.

The family structural characteristics of the respondents were discussed on the basis of the type of family, size of family and gender of the head of household. The type of family consisted of nuclear family, joint family and extended family. The study depicted that majority of the respondents were living in nuclear type of family. On the other hand, a minimal constituent of below 10% of the entire respondents were belonging to joint family and extended family. This signified the important nature of polarized family structure and independency amongst the respondents. In addition concerning the size of family of the

respondents the study depicted that more than half (58%) of the entire respondents were having a medium size (4-6) family. Further, a maximum of 94% of the respondents household were headed by male except in the marginal case of 6% of the respondents' female headed households.

The social structural characteristics of the respondents such as ethnicity, tribe, religion and denomination were explored to reflect the social affinity of the respondents. The result depicted that the entire respondents belonged to the tribe of Tangkhul, Naga ethnicity. In regards to religion, the entire respondents affiliated to Christianity. However, they were divided into two denominations. Between these two denominations, Baptists were found to be the majority while the Roman Catholics were found in minimal proportion.

The economic structural characteristics of the respondents were explored which consisted of occupations and annual income. The occupations of the respondents were examined on the basis of seven (7) categories. Amongst these categories, a maximum of more than a half (56%) of the entire respondents were cultivator of which majority (80%) of them belonging to the least developed village. This was followed by respondents' occupation with one seventh (14%) and 8% of them as home maker and govt. employee respectively. Meanwhile, a minimum proportion of respondents were private employee and self-employed for living. In another case, few respondents did not state their occupations. The pattern on the annual income of the respondents depicted that the maximum of slightly more than one third (34%) of the entire respondents were having an income of ₹40001-₹60000 annually. In another case, the higher proportion of respondents whose annual income was below ₹40000 belonged to the least developed village. Notably, there were no respondents with income of ₹100001 - ₹120000 and ₹120001 & above per annum that belonged to the least developed village.

### **Institutional framework and nature of women's participation**

The Tangkhul traditional local governance system is an ages old system that has been practicing since time immemorial. Its structure is solely governed by the traditional customary law that is systematically mechanized in line with patrilineal characteristics. In both the least developed village and the most developed village the local governing body was composed of only male representatives from the clans. However, pattern of selecting the head of the village council was found slightly different between the two villages. In the least developed village the republican or the chairmanship system of governance is being followed that the chairman as the head of the council who had to be an elected one. It is worth mentioning that only the

male member of the community; normatively the head of the household is eligible to cast a vote. Whereas in the case of the most developed village the form of governance is monarchy or headmanship/chieftainship, that the hereditary headman is the permanent head of the village council in nature. Otherwise the practice and pattern of selection of member representatives from the clans through the process of nomination is the same as in both the villages. The size of member composition of the village council depends on the number and size of the clans whereby the size of the clans is determined by the number of sub-clans which is composed by the number of household belonging to a particular clan. The whole system or procedure is fully governed by the dictate of customary law.

In regards to the examination on the nature and status quo of women's participation in local governance, the study found that despite the indication of high level of women awareness on the structure and affairs of the local council, they were invisible in the local decision making body as in village assembly, clans meeting and village council. The only channel by which women accessed to the affairs of the local governance was through their husbands. Otherwise, in the matters relating to the affairs of women had to delegate representative; normally the office bearers who would seek agendas approval from the male dominant local decision making body. The results of the analysis of the data depicted predominant prevalence of undesirable traditional implications upon the status quo of women's participation in local governance.

### **Perceptions of women towards their participation in local governance**

The study indicated positive linkage between the results of the analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative information. In pertaining to perceptions of women, notably more than half of the respondents viewed women's participation in local governance as important and imperative in promoting over all development. They believed that inclusion of women in local council would ensure strengthening of traditional system of local governance. On the other hand, women strongly refuted that the existing system of governance favors only men. Therefore, favorable provision needs to be created to enable women's participation in the local governance. Most of the respondents perceived that nowadays women are educated enough to be able to handle the affairs of the governance. Also, they asserted that equal opportunity and gender justice must be ensured in the society. No society can run by men alone just as family is incomplete without women. Thus, women are the backbone of the society. Meanwhile, there were some minimal proportion of respondents opined that women's participation in local governance would overburden them therefore inefficient and

unproductive. Thus, women would best performed efficiently with their already heavy laden roles and responsibilities.

### **Perceived constraints towards women's participation in local governance**

In this sub-section the summarized findings on the perceived constraints that limit women's participation in traditional local governance are presented. They were organized in a descending manner on the basis of total scored average percentage as below.

#### **Tradition and Customary law**

The maximum of more than four-fifth (87.5%) and nearly two-third (65.2%) of respondents from the least developed village and most developed village respectively adjudicated that the existing system of governance is the system co-terminus with customary law provided no space for women involvement in decision making body. They further refuted that the male dominance nature of traditional system relegates women as second citizens and thus, it circumscribes them to grant a space in the local council. In conjoining to this factor the respondents remarked various technical difficulties as such that the system is exercised on the basis of male centered lineage or otherwise patrilineal.

#### **Multiple traditional roles and responsibilities**

The examination revealed that diverse roles and responsibilities of women posed as one of the major challenges faced by women. Their never ending domestic chores, livelihood and allied activities and other social responsibilities demand maximum of their time. The difficulty in balancing between domestic/personal responsibilities and other social responsibilities result in refraining themselves from participation in governance. The respondents further accounted that the nature of roles and responsibilities assigned to them strictly based on the traditional gender centered classifications.

#### **Inferiority complex amongst women**

The mentality of considering women being inferior to men is of commonly prevalence perception amongst women. One of the causal factors in developing collective inferior mentality amongst women is the impacts of customary and traditional practices, that they are highly influenced by such practices instrumental in subordination and exclusion of women in the society. Women undoubtedly, accustom to such oppression and dependent on male supremacy. At the extreme end some of the respondents quipped, "What can I do? I am just a woman so what difference could I make?" This corroborated with the mental state of feeling weaker and lesser amongst the women.

### **Inferiority perception towards women**

Most of the respondents argued that they were looked down by the male section in the society. They recounted how unfortunately in the past women were treated as inferior and as second citizens in the society and yet what is more dismayed to observe but still the prevailing mentality amongst men. On the other hand during the key informant interviews some men commented that it will be such ludicrous fact to be led by women and further term it as 'dishonorable' reality. They stated that women have different roles and responsibilities in contrast to that of men. This indicated that man is a superior being and must not take a command from woman. Therefore women are expected to listen to men and not vice versa. Thus it was found that the influence of traditional practices and beliefs on the status quo of women's participation in TLG is highly considerable. It does not only affect the mentality and attitudes of women but significantly upon the mentality and perception of men in the society as well.

### **Lack of knowledge, skills and capacity amongst women**

The analysis depicted two significant indicators in regards to this factor constraining women's participation in the local governance. Firstly, some of the respondents adjudicated that traditionally women have been kept aloof from the involvement in the decision making body. To be involved in governance, one requires possessing certain qualities and skills and to exacerbate the condition they asserted that they have never been shouldered any responsibilities in decision making body. Therefore, they believed they lack in skills and capacities to handle the affairs of governance. Secondly, other section of the respondents argued that unlike in the past women at present are educated and capable to handle affairs in governance. But when they are asked whether they would be willing to become a member of the village council, most of them succumbed to their own apprehensive perception by saying that they don't have the knowledge, skills and capacity to be involved in decision making body.

### **Lack of encouragement and cooperation from men**

It is important to note that less than 10% of the entire respondents argued that lack of encouragement and cooperation from men is one of the prevalent constraining factors towards their participation in local governance. Discrimination on the basis of socially construct gender classification highly influenced upon the condition of women's participation in governance. This constraining factor conjoined with the inferiority perceptions of men

towards women. Therefore, the implication depicted dearth of encouragement and cooperation from men that hampered women's involvement in decision making body.

#### **Lack of commitment from women**

The study depicted existing complicacy amongst the women themselves. Despite, having adhered to positive perceptions towards women's participation in local governance, women commitment and determination were found significantly invisible. There was no collective attempt and assertion in creating ambience that would be favorable for women's participation in governance. Thus, this had been reflected negatively upon the promotion of women's participation in governance.

#### **Insecurity amongst men**

The fear of losing powers and control over the affairs of governance developed apprehensive and insecure feelings amongst men reflected upon the condition of women participation in governance. Some of the respondents adjudicated that this feeling of insecurity amongst men acted as one of the deadlocks in opening up the opportunity for women to participate in decision making body. Further, they asserted that men honestly could not accept the fact of women's participation in governance. During the focus group discussions it was observed that some men were askance about this idea of women's participation in governance.

### **5.3 Suggestions**

- ❖ Provision and situation must be created to ensure women's participation having the long term objectives towards promoting women's representation in village council.
- ❖ Promoting women's participation in local decision making body requires having situation that would improve their confidence and sense of responsibility. It should strengthen the traditional system of local governance that fits with the present context.
- ❖ Sensitization amongst male population for women's participation in the local governance.
- ❖ Collective and mutual efforts from both men and women should be given. Without the support of men and commitment from women it will not be able to yield positive result.
- ❖ Formulation of policy and strategies to ensure women's participation and representative in local council should reflect enthusiasm amongst women therefore higher efficiency and productivity.



- ❖ Promotion of women's participation should be based on the context of the society, imposition and imitation of foreign practice should be avoided.
- ❖ Change must occur from within not without.

#### **Social work intervention**

- ❖ Extensive effort to sensitize and promote capacity building amongst women needs to be done.
- ❖ Intensive and extensive consultation with the stakeholders and apex organizations to develop strategies and measures to promote women's participation in decision making.
- ❖ Social workers can play tremendous roles in the field of advocacy.
- ❖ Social worker can also play a role as mobiliser and facilitator to sensitize and in bringing public understanding about the orthodoxy of women's participation.

#### **For further research**

- ❖ Comparative examination from both the perspective of men and women would enable to reflect different dimensions on the situation of women in governance that may help in formulation of new strategies to strengthen the local governing body
- ❖ The studies can extend to other tribal community incorporating bigger sample size.

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