

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MIZORAM

B. LALFAKAWMI

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MIZORAM

By

B. Lalfakawmi

Political Science Department

Submitted

in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science of  
Mizoram University, Aizawl

Department of Political Science

Mizoram University

2019

**Declaration**

I, B.Lalfakawmi, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me and that 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/Institution.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Political Science.

B. LALFAKAWMI

(Candidate)

Prof. JAGADISH KUMAR PATNAIK

(Head)

Prof. K V Reddy

(Supervisor)



**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY** *Post Box No. 190*

**AIZAWL**

[www.mzu.edu.in](http://www.mzu.edu.in)

*Gram : MZU*

*Phone : (0389) 2331610 /  
2331609*

*Mobile: 9436769468*

*Email:kvidyasagarr@gmail.com*

---

*Department of Political Science*

*Prof. K.V. Reddy, Supervisor*

### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “ POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MIZORAM ”, submitted by B.LALFAKAWMI for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, is a research work done under my supervision and guidance. The thesis submitted by her has not formed the basis for the award to the scholar for any degree or any other similar title and it has not yet been submitted as a dissertation or thesis in any university. I also certify that the thesis represents objective study and independent work of the scholar.

(Prof.K.V.Reddy)

Supervisor

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I want to thank Almighty God for giving me a chance to complete my research work through all his innumerable blessings he has bestowed upon me.

I want to give a big thanks to my supervisor, Prof. KV Reddy, whose continuous and unfailing guidance has helped me to undertake the research till my completion. He has been very kind and patient inspite of my limitations and ailments.

I want to thank my husband, Lallawmsanga, and my children for the endless support that I received from them without which I could not have completed. I thank my parents and my family for their constant encouragement and support throughout my studies. I would like to give special thanks to my sister, Lalnunpuii, who has helped me in all the field works that I needed to undergo for my research.

Finally, I want to thank my friends and my colleagues in the department for their understanding and continuous support all through my research works.

Aizawl

B. Lalfakawmi

October 2019

## **CONTENTS**

**DECLARATION**

**CERTIFICATE**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**ABBREVIATION**

**LIST OF TABLES**

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

**Page No.**

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION	1-33
CHAPTER 2 : POLITICAL PROCESS IN MIZORAM : SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND HISTORICAL AND STATUS OF WOMEN	34-74
CHAPTER 3 : WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	75-115
CHAPTER 4 : ROLE OF CHURCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS	116-158
CHAPTER 5 : URBAN – RURAL DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	159-199
CHAPTER 6 : PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	200-247
CHAPTER 7 : CONCLUSION	248-260

**APPENDICES**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
2.0	District-wise number of Literates and Literacy Rate	38
2.1	Literacy Percentage of Mizoram from 1901-2011	64
2.2	Literacy Rate of Urban and Rural Population	65
2.3	Literacy Rate in India	65
2.4	Census-wise Number of Workers in Mizoram	68
2.5	Number of Workers – 2001 Census	68
2.6	Number of Workers – 2011 Census	69
2.7	Number of State Government Employees	70
3.0	Women in Parliaments	81
3.1	Percentage of Voter Turnout in Lok Sabha Elections	91
3.2	Women Contestants in Lok Sabha Elections	93
3.3	Women ‘s Representation in Union Council of Ministers	95
3.4	Women in North East Indian States	98
3.5	Reasons for Low Participation of Women in Politics	105
3.6	Participation with Stronger Voice	106
3.6.1	More opportunities for Presence of Women in Legislature	106
3.6.2	Favour of Reservation for Women	107
3.6.3	Reservation Enhance Women’s Participation	108
3.7	Legislative Assembly Elections in Mizoram	112
3.8	Lok Sabha Elections in Mizoram	113
4.0	Membership of Churches in Mizoram	133
4.1	Role of Church in determining Political Participation of Women	134
4.2	Church Hinders/Encourages Women’s Political Participation	135
4.3	Civil Society Organisations Helps Women Enter Politics	136
5.0	Regularity in Voting	166
5.1	Reason for Casting Vote	167

5.1.1	Motivation for Voting	167
5.1.2	Discussion of Political Issues	168
5.1.3	Discussion of Politics with Whom	169
5.2	Voter Turnout in Assembly Elections in Mizoram	170
5.3	Voter Turnout in Lok Sabha Elections in Mizoram	171
5.4	Active Membership of Political Party	173
5.4.1	Activities in Party during Elections	173
5.4.2	Whether Parents belong to Political Party	174
5.5	Women Candidate's Status and Locality	181
6.0	Approval of Political Career for Women	209
6.1	Reasons for Approval of Political Career for Women	210
6.1.1	Reasons for Disapproval of Political Career for Women	211
6.2	Success of Women as Political Leaders	211
6.2.1	Reason for Success of Women as Political Leaders	212
6.2.2	Reasons for Failure of Women as Political Leaders	213
6.3-6.5	Women Candidates and their Performance in Elections	223-227
6.6	Percentage of Women Candidates	228
6.7	Women in the 1 <sup>st</sup> Aizawl Municipal Elections	238
6.8	Women in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aizawl Municipal Council Elections	239
6.9	Reason for Contesting Elections	243
6.9.1	Difficulties Encountered as Elected Members	243
6.9.2	Mode of Attending Meetings and Deliberations	244
6.9.3	Gain Confidence After Being Elected	245
6.9.4	More Responsibilities After Being Elected	245
6.9.5	Differential Regards from Other People	246



## LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page Number
1. Questionnaire	i-ix
2. Aims and Objectives of Mizoram People's Forum	x-xi
3. Aims and Objectives of Mizo HmeichheTangrual	xi
4. Aims and Objectives of United Mizo Grassroot Organisation	xii
5. Aims and Objectives of All Mizoram Women Federation	xii-xiii
6. Aims and Objectives of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl	xiii



# CHAPTER-I

## INTRODUCTION

The first chapter tries to explain and clarify the concept of political participation. It consists of the various definitions and explanations given by different political thinkers, the importance and necessity of the participation of people in their government and how it is the basis of modern democratic system of government. The chapter thus, covers the introduction, significance of the study, review of the literature, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, methodology and the chapterization.

Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘participation’ as ‘taking part (with others) in some action or matter’. According to Michael Rush and Philip Althoff, “ Political Participation means the movement of the individual at various levels in the political system.” Almond and Powell also describes political participation as “ The involvement of the members of society in the decision-making process.”<sup>1</sup> Since the time of Plato, people’s participation in public affairs has been a subject of interest in political science. Aristotle has also emphasized on sharing of the responsibilities of public offices. He even defined citizen as one who shares in the administration of justice and in the holding of office.<sup>2</sup> Since politics is a study of power, political participation involves participation in the exercise of this power which may be in the form of taking part in decision-making or in changing the existing policies to make

---

<sup>1</sup> KK Ghai, *Political Sociology*, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 2011, p.223

<sup>2</sup>M Ramchander and K Lakshmi, *Women and Politics: A study in Political Participation*, Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1993, p.22

improvements. Political participation generally requires two decisions, one must decide to act or not to act and must also decide the direction of this action.<sup>3</sup> Political Participation includes different types of participation in politics like participation in mobilization, in electoral process and in decision making at different levels of political system. For effective political participation, political consciousness and political awareness are very important as they create a sense of political interest amongst the people which in turn brings about enormous participation of masses in the affairs of political system. The process by which people participate in the political process is referred to as political participation. Traditional democratic theory generally regards participation by an individual in political activity as a virtue in its own right. The right to political participation refers to a citizen's right to seek to influence public affairs. The French Revolution of 1789 says that all citizens have the right to take part personally or by their representatives in the formulation of law<sup>4</sup>.

The role of participation was limited only to the law-making function in the earlier days but had considerably widened with the emergence of welfare state along with the increasing role of state. No political system, particularly no democratic political system can function without the active participation of the people in the political process. Participation in politics has existed throughout history in one form or the other, but democracy provides for the maximum scope of participation for the citizens which may be in the form of direct or indirect participation. Participation has been seen as a civic duty, as a sign of public health, as the best method of ensuring

---

<sup>3</sup> LB Milbrath, *Conceptual Problems of Political Participation*, 1965 cited in Ramchander and Lakshmi, *Women and Politics: A Study in Political Participation*, Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1993, p.24

<sup>4</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.66

one's private interests are not neglected and as a sine qua non of democracy.<sup>5</sup> The legal foundation of the right to political participation is the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which has been further elaborated in the later treaties especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1976.<sup>6</sup> Right to political participation is a political right which is restricted to citizens only while all other rights are inherent rights of human beings for being born as humans without any distinction as to race, sex, colour, place of birth.

Austine Ranney says that most governments, democratic or otherwise, want their citizens to participate in at least some political activities. One may have direct participation by taking part in political context like elections or political institutions, parties or interest groups or indirect political participation as in the social context like being a member of civil society organisations, sports clubs, religious organisations, business associations and the like.

Political participation refers to a voluntary act of an individual in involving oneself with the socio-political activities of the political system. It assumes different forms in different political systems, even where similar political institutions function like political parties and elections and is, thus, not easy to give an exact definition. However, according to Myron Weiner, “ political participation refers to 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, administration of public affairs or the choice of political

---

<sup>5</sup> Dharam Vir, *Political Efficacy among Urban Women in India* in Dharam Vir and Kamlesh Mahajan (eds), *Women's Movement: Politics and Awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, p.75

<sup>6</sup> Hans Klein, “*The Right to Political Participation and the Information Society*” Seminar Paper presented at Global Democracy Conference, 2005

leaders at any level of government, local or national.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, political participation is an essential ingredient of democracy by involving individuals and groups in taking decisions and influencing the decision making process. Participation results in the greatest good of the greatest number because it benefits not only the participants but also the larger community as a whole. Success of democracy depends upon the extent of participation especially at the local level. A democratic system sustains because of the participation of citizens in elections and if the citizens do not participate, the continuance of the system may be jeopardised.

Political participation varies according to the form of political system. While it is the highest in the liberal democratic countries, it is least in the authoritarian states. In the liberal democracies, voluntary participation is the norm but in communist state, regimented participation is more common, its main function is to mobilise the people behind the regime and to strengthen the authority of the government. In the third world countries, personal manipulation is a characteristic form of participation.<sup>8</sup> According to Sidney Verba, “ Political participation affords citizens in a democracy an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concerns and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond.”<sup>9</sup> Political participation can be both voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary participation involves activities that have the intent or effort of influencing government action, either directly affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make these policies, that participation is not

---

<sup>7</sup> Myron Weiner, “*Political Participation: Crisis of the Political Process*” in L.Binder et al,(eds.) *Crisis and Sequences in Political Development*, Princeton University Press,Princeton.1979, p.164

<sup>8</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.80

<sup>9</sup>Verba et al. *Voice and Equality, Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, London: Harvard, 1995

obligatory and receives no pay or only token financial compensation and the last thing is that it is not just being attentive to politics (watching news, discussing politics with friends) but doing politics.

Political participation can be defined as those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics. Participation in the electoral processes involves much more than just voting but derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate, the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. Political participation can be conventional and unconventional. Unconventional participation is a relatively uncommon behavior that challenges or defies government channels or the dominant culture. It is usually stressful for both participants and their opponents. People participating in unconventional ways tend to share three characteristics:

- a) Distrust of the political system
- b) A strong sense of political efficacy
- c) A highly developed sense of group consciousness

Conventional participation is a relatively routine, added behaviour that uses the channels of representative government especially voting in elections.<sup>10</sup>

Political participation is often referred to as ‘political engagement’ or ‘public involvement in decision-making’. Political engagement has traditionally been thought of as a set of rights and duties that involve formally organised civic and

---

<sup>10</sup>[https://college.cengage.com/polisci/janda/chall\\_dem/8e/instructors/.../parallel\\_07.doc](https://college.cengage.com/polisci/janda/chall_dem/8e/instructors/.../parallel_07.doc)

political activities, eg . voting or joining a political party. <sup>11</sup>Samuel Huntington observed that political participation leads to high expectations which might not be satisfied due to lack of institutionalization in some developing countries. Yet one witness a rise in participation levels. Thus, people are involved in party politics, electoral politics, political communication, interest articulation, political socialization, political movements, conferences, debates, strikes, demonstrations, political reforms, political modernization and development. The concept of Political Participation covers all these aspects of people's participation in politics of their state. Margaret Conway also defined political participation as " those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, or the policies of government." <sup>12</sup>

In addition, political participation is a process in which people try to affect the state, politics and government in taking part in the electoral process, encouraging others to vote, even members of any campaign by giving a knowledge of politics or discussing politics with friends, colleagues or family members, attending political rallies or protest meetings, joining the public or street, agitating to get public servants to rectify their spousal, being active members of organizations involved in solving community problems, providing money for a political cause and working with others for trying to solve related problems. Munroe defined political participation in terms of the degree to which citizens exercise their right to engage in political activities

---

<sup>11</sup>CJ Uhlaner, Political Participation in NJ Smelser & PB Baltes(eds.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social Behavioural Sciences*, Amsterdam, 2002, p.22

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Conway, Women and Political Participation Political Science and Politics, *American Political Science Association*, vol.34, No.2, 2001, p.231



( To protest, to speak freely, to vote, to influence or to get more energetically involved).<sup>13</sup> In other words, political participation means taking part in the political process. It means involvement in political process directly or indirectly through the exercise of franchise rights or by sharing political power. By taking part in political activities, it may vary from mere participation to the holding of public office which is available to citizens of most countries but the more demanding and time consuming a political activity, the fewer people participate. Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system because it fosters stability and order by strengthening the legitimacy of political authority. The right to political participation refers to the citizen's right to seek and to try to influence public affairs. The foundational legal articulation of this right can be found in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 and it has been further formalized and elaborated in the later treaties, most notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, 1976.<sup>14</sup> The United Nations through its various operating entities assess the respect given by various signatories and if it sense violations of it, the concerned states are called to change their practices.

Political participation is greatly dependent upon the process of political socialization of the general public. There are various factors influencing political participation of an individual like personal factors including knowledge, values and attitudes, beliefs, personality traits, political factors including the amount of exposure to political information through media, political parties and other political action groups and

---

<sup>13</sup> T Monroe, *An Introduction to Politics: Lectures for first year students*, Canoe: Kingston, 2002, p.22

<sup>14</sup> Hans Klein, "*The Right to Political Participation*", paper presented at Global Democracy Conference on 29 May- 1 June, 2005

socio- economic factors like caste, tribe, language, class, occupation, age and gender. Political participation is also affected by environmental factors like geography, industrialisation, level of technological advancement and demographic features. In addition to the factors mentioned earlier, the situational factors also determine the extent of people's participation in politics.

In every political system, policies of the government greatly affect the political participation of the people. The degree of political participation by the people reflects the extent of their political consciousness, awareness and intelligence of which is expressed through the participation in political activities sponsored by the political parties, pressure groups, media and associations, highlighting the socio- economic and political aspirations of people. Political participation involves both the examination of social bases of political orientations and the process of political socialization. Political participation can be considered to include an involvement in any form of organised activity that affects, or seeks to affect, these power relationships.<sup>15</sup> In the contemporary world, political participation is considered to be an essential feature of every political system, be it modern, traditional, developed or developing as none of them can work without the performance of political roles by their people.

The act of involving oneself in the decision-making process, exercising the right to franchise, casting votes and choosing leadership are some activities which serve to gratify the voter's sense of self-esteem. Participation helps the individual to be effective and it associates him or her with the political system. Higher the rates and

---

<sup>15</sup>Puran Chandra, *Political Dynamics of Women*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2005, p.116

levels, the more varied the forms of participation, the healthier is the democratic system.<sup>16</sup> Incidentally, individuals are motivated by elections to involve themselves in the decision-making process and identify themselves in the political systems. They make them feel worthy to influence the political process, government and express their opinions. Thus, nowadays, political participation is considered as a civic duty, determinant of public health and a means for ensuring the accomplishment of one's interests. Political Participation also connotes activities for protecting one's rights and duties and advancing the interests through competition.<sup>17</sup>

Politics is a platform from where policies are formed for the betterment of society and the citizens but often some sections of society are poorly represented.<sup>18</sup> Women are an integral part of every society. Status of women in any society is directly linked with social and cultural traditions, stages of economic development achieved, educational levels, attitude of the society towards women, social and religious taboos, women's own awareness and political attainments for women in society.<sup>19</sup> John Stuart Mill's "*The Subjection of Women*" and Engel's "*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*" are regarded as the beginning of serious academic discussions on women's issues. Mill was a very influential advocate in England and his work had a powerful impact on the status of women at the time. He opined that the progress of a country is dependent on the status of its women in the family and in the society.

---

<sup>16</sup> ND Palmer, *Elections and Political Developments in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976, p.59,61

<sup>17</sup>Niroj Sinha, *Women in Indian Politics*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000, p.16

<sup>18</sup>Utsa Sarmen, *Women in Bengal:1950-1975*, *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. LXXVII, No.2, April-June, 2016, p.69

<sup>19</sup> Ram Krishna Mandal and Minto Ete, *Women in North East India*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p.1

The status of women in the society further reflects their position in the political system, the extent of their participation, the role played by them in the decision-making process and involvement in the governance of a country. Thus, while dealing with political participation of women, the variables that are considered include women as electorates, party members, party officials, contesting in elections, canvassing, elected members, attendance in meetings, participation in committees, moving resolutions and taking part in discussions, relations with the electorates and constituencies, participation in final decision-making and observing and checking how far the decisions are implemented.

When the term participation is involved, elections continue to be the focus for studying the phenomenon of participation. It is through elections that the people were provided opportunities to choose their representatives as well as a scope for participation in politics. Participation of citizens in the process of elections through the exercise of their voting rights leads effective legitimacy to the political system.<sup>20</sup> The role of women in the field of electoral politics can be measured by the turnout of women voters and the number of women candidates in each election and the extent of women participation in the electoral process.<sup>21</sup> Women's limited participation in politics has been focused on situational factors, particularly the strains and conflicts resulting from the multiple roles of mother, wife and politician. Sushila Kaushik is of the view that despite these developments, the following can be said about women's participation in politics in India:

---

<sup>20</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.149

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.149

1. The extent, nature, and level of Indian women's participation is much greater than in many countries;
2. This participation has been more or less steadily expanding over the years through various elections – as voters, as candidates and in terms of participation in campaigning,
3. The gap in turnout between men and women is increasingly narrowing down; and
4. The number of women getting elected to representative bodies is steadily increasing.<sup>22</sup>

Female politicians and public office holders give emphasis on their role as mothers and wives in addition to the barriers imposed by societal definitions of appropriate female roles and the obligations associated with them which led many to conclude for the reason of negligible numbers of entry of female in politics. It has also been argued that for women to participate actively in politics, they must have adequate financial resources to pay others to perform their services associated with the traditional female roles like child care and housekeeping. Lynn and Flora even went further claiming that there was societal punishment for women who deviate from traditional female roles, particularly the role of mother and this punishment affects patterns of female political participation.<sup>23</sup> Marcia Lee believes that lack of female participation in politics stems from three major factors namely children at home,

---

<sup>22</sup>Nisha Mohan, *Problem and Challenges of women participation in Politics*, Paper presented in 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research, 4-5 August, 2018

<sup>23</sup> Marianne Githens, *Women and State Politics: An Assessment* in Janet A Flemming (Ed), *Political Women: current Roles in State and Local Government*, Sage Publications. Inc, Beverly Hills, California, 1984, p.47

women's perception of their role and of politics and fear of sex discrimination.<sup>24</sup> Unequal working hours and an incentive for ongoing activities appear to be those aspects of a public office that discourage women from carrying out such activities. In addition, women are inhibited from running for public office because they feel that it is not right for women to do so and because others can allow it. Such activities are contrary to their traditional role.

Regarding the Indian context, more than seventy years have passed since the Indian Independence and several elections have been held both in the center and in different states. In these elections, the governments have been changed a number of times. The general public has also responded by participating in these elections. Participation in the Indian elections is mostly restricted to voting which is more so in the case of women. The level of participation in the elections has greatly increased as the percentage of voter turnout has increased in the subsequent elections. Various studies have shown that the increase had been both in the urban and rural areas although the level of turnout for women is lower in some rural constituencies. But as a result of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments of India, there has been increased participation of women in the lower level of decision making in recent years.

Voting is a regularised procedure for choosing leaders and transference of power but as an index to measure political participation it is inadequate, particularly in the case of India where elections are largely manipulated.<sup>25</sup> Women electorate turnout is more

---

<sup>24</sup>shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in

<sup>25</sup> Chandra Puran, *Political Dynamics of Women*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2005, pp.17,18

due to mobilisation than the political awareness.<sup>26</sup> The outcome of such type of mobilisation-based participation has been higher turnout of women electorate in the rural areas than in the urban areas. At the same time the number of women participating in the election campaigns or contesting in the elections is still negligible. Moreover, women are, in general, not motivated to become members of political parties and those who are members are not active members and only insignificant number of them are executives at different levels of the parties.

Women's participation in politics in general policy and electoral policy can be attributed, in particular, to the role of women in society and family. Women are generally considered to be engaging in domestic affairs, which should be a priority, and then only other things follow, such as government and politics. Women's problems became world phenomena in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The low degree of the participation of women in socio-political matters draws the special attention of scholars in the twentieth century and women themselves had become more and more assertive of their rights with the help of the emerging feminist movements and emancipation struggles. Women's participation has covered a range of activities including movements, protests and support meetings on all issues connected.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of Mizoram, despite the involvement and participation of women in various dimensions like economic, social and religious dimensions, the participation of women in the political sphere is comparatively very low, less said the better about

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.18

<sup>27</sup>Puran Chandra, *Political Dynamics of Women*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2005, p.116

electoral politics. Although women participated actively in the electoral process, their election to the legislative positions is sabotaged. Further, unlike majority of the rural women, urban and educated women show more interest in the political process. Despite the active role of church and NGOs, women's participation is not improved so far. However, with the implementation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution, Mizoram has also practised reservation of seats for women in the local administrative bodies except in the southern part of the state where there is no systematic reservation of seats, which results in more participation of women in local politics. On the other hand, the legislative assembly of the state has been consisting of only male members most of the time, unlike the other states of the Indian Union.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Review of the existing literature has been undertaken in order to have a clear understanding of the proposed research problem and to provide a basis for the theoretical framework. Besides, this exercise enables the researcher to identify the limitations of existing literature so as to offer rationale for one's research.

Sudhir Varma (1997) in his book 'Women's struggle for political space : From enfranchisement to Participation' has started his book by tracing the problem of women's role in societal matters from ancient to modern times. He exposed the impact of Christianity and Islam and the history of events in different parts of the world. He has included the enfranchisement of women in different countries and the conditions of women in Indian political scenario by quoting statistics relating women as voters in India and factors affecting their voting pattern. Even though his book has



covered a wide area of political participation of women, he has taken up the cases of very few states in the Indian Union which is not adequate enough.

Sumana Pandey (1990), in her book 'Women in Politics', has written that the women in India were on their way to achieve liberation and freedom. From the survey she conducted in the city of Jaipur, had observed the changing role of women in political participation. Her findings regarding the attitudes of married and unmarried, working and otherwise women is very interesting which states that working women had come forward in every field and were trying their best to perform their duties in spite of their family obligations. Although the work is very interesting and a step forward in understanding of political status of women in India, she has extended her survey in Jaipur city alone and it is doubtful that the same could be applied for whole of India.

Letha Kumari (2006) in her book 'Women in Politics: Participation and Governance' offered readers a powerful way to understand political socialization of women, gender gaps in political attitudes, women's political capabilities and patterns of women's political participation. The book also provides a comparative information on how women can enhance quality of democracy and good governance and thereby promote the participation and representation of women in political life. These are some important points that need to be covered in the case of Mizoram.

Bonita Aleaz (2005) in her book 'Emergent Women – Mizo women's perspectives' examines the forces that determined the emergence of Mizo women, from the pre-modern to modern and explained them as extraneous factors and within structural, the former relate to modernizing effects of the female missionaries and the latter to

the rigid patriarchal structure of the Mizo society, which retained its strict hierarchical parameters despite the changes brought about by the process of modernisation. In Mizoram, holistic concerns remain paramount, the whole society's progression is the main concern of decision-makers, women's desires, aspirations and demands obviously are submerged in their concern for the whole. Her main objective was to view the perceptions of women themselves about the emergent situation, their hopes and the extent of their willingness to accomplish their objectives. She has made a very significant contribution regarding the position of Mizo women in the society and the changes that have taken place therein.

C.Nunthara (1996) in his book ' Mizoram- Society and Polity ' mentions with regard to the significance of government policy. In the earlier days, the educated group and the commercial class in Mizoram had been greatly affected by the government policy as their future depended on the role of government. In contrast, the mass of the agriculture workers had been less dependent on the government and therefore, were less politically active. He said that with the introduction of the new land-use policy, future work pattern of the rural masses depended on the policy of the government which was enforced by the MNF uprising of 1966.

Nunthara mentions that the conflicting pressures brought about by the political crises after 1966 resulted in a decreased rate of political participation. However, with the return of normalcy after 1969, there prevailed a steady rise in the level of political participation where new leaders and new parties emerged as a consequence. Although his work has made great contributions in the study of state politics, it has

become outdated and thus more recent studies are what one needed for the present political conditions of the state.

R.K.Satapathy (2009) in his article ‘ Mizoram : Renewed Mandate for the State Government’ has mentioned a brief history of Mizoram tracing from pre- colonial to colonial period, moved on to the post-independence era before dealing with the electoral politics of the post statehood Mizoram. He further dealt on different elections which had taken place up to the 2003 Assembly elections and summed up the article with the support base of the MNF party and reasons of their victory. It is a very interesting work that dealt with the politics of the state but at the same time, there is still a need for continuation of such studies as there prevailed recent developments in the state politics, which includes the State Assembly elections and Lok Sabha General elections that have taken place in the state and this is what the research has taken up.

Irene Colbert (2008) in her article ‘ Women and Politics in Mizoram ’ has written about the position of women in the Mizo society in the socio-economic and political arena. She also mentioned that eventhough the position of Mizo women is more dominating than that of men in economic field, their position in the society and family is not secure and their role in politics is very minimal despite the efforts of various women’s organisations towards raising their social status

Kalpana Roy (1999) in her book ‘ Women in Indian Politics ’ mentions that women still faced many obstacles in their fight for representation and no women’s organization specifically focus on getting women elected at the national level. She further mentioned that unlike the elite women activists of the nationalist movement,

most women of today have no economic freedom to pursue their life and career. Besides, the material circumstances of their upbringing have affected their choices for them and inhibited their participation in formal politics. She opined that the women's cultural socialization and the fear of not being settled in life have also lessened many women's desire to participate in politics. Similarly, the Mizo women are found to be abstaining themselves from political activities for the same reasons and the book can be applicable in the Mizoram context.

Bhawana Jharta (1996) in her book ' Women and politics in India : Impact of family and education on women political activists ' analyzed the role and impact of family and education on women's participation in politics, which is confined to the women segment of political realm of the state of Himachal Pradesh. She had chosen these two variables because they were significantly related to the political participation of women, for being a booster as well as hindrance for them. This book is very useful in understanding the present day position of women in the political process and can be considered very useful for women's studies in the state.

Nirmala Vasantha kumar (2014) in her work ' Role and Identity of women in the Church ' stated the status of women in the Indian society which is patriarchal and hence governed by patriarchal values which control the behaviour of women and thus prohibiting them from participating in some specific activities. She further stated that the situation with regard to the identity and role of women in the church is not anyway different from that in the society due to the fact that the culture from which Christianity originated was patriarchal. She further made an evaluation of of

the position of women in the different Churches of India and mentioned the Churches which accepted or rejected the ordination of women in India.

Padmalaya Mahapatra (2008) in her work ‘ Status of Mizo women : Some reflections’ has pointed out that only democratization and empowerment could provide the Mizo women an avenue through which they would continue their journey towards her total emancipation which can be achieved by way of proportional representation of women, fixation of certain quota of public offices and increasing the political activities of autonomous women’s bodies. Her suggestions regarding the improvement of Mizo women’s position in the political sphere proves to be very relevant as can be seen in the later years.

P. Moses Manohar (1999) in his article ‘ Political Empowerment of Women: Reflections on Current Political Debate in India’ mentioned the increasing consciousness about gender equality day by day. He continued to mention that the dichotomy between the personal and political sphere was questionable and that political empowerment of women was the need of the hour to make a difference in the lives of women in particular and that of the society in general. He further stated that in order to make right political decisions, participation of women in the political fora is necessary. By analysing the role of women in Panchayats and Parliament, he argued that the women did not get adequate representation and power in both the two systems. In Panchayats, the women occupying reserved seats faced oppositions from their husbands, from the upper castes, from fellow panchayat members and male members of Panchayat staff or government bureaucrats. In the Parliament, representation of women is very less, only 10 % at its peak. He further mentioned the

inadequacy and drawbacks of the Christian personal law for women in relation to marriage, divorce, succession and adoption. The Church also lacks adequate representation of women in the ordained ministry of the Church. The writer has made a relevant study on the position of women in various respects and is a great and useful help in further studies in the area.

Lalhmasai Chuaungo (2009) in her article ‘ Women’s Contribution to Socio-Economic Development with particular reference to Mizoram ’ has written about the great economic contribution of women in the world, especially the hard work undergone by women in the third world countries who worked for around 16 hours a day. She came to the Indian horizon sharing about the ways in which the Indian women have stepped out of the four walls of kitchen to earn for their living. Pointing out at the North Eastern region of India, she described how the women in N.E India have worked for their survival which is mainly in the informal sectors. Among the North Eastern States, the percentage of female work participation is the highest in Mizoram. Within Mizoram, from the past, it can be seen that the role of the Mizo women in the economic structure was very great. From the agricultural society upto the present day, women have always played a dynamic and dominant role. Mizoram witnessed a rising trend in the number and percentage of female employees in the Public Sector during the last three decades.

The writer has made a study of rate of growth of female employments in the past four decades from 1976 to 2006 and analysed the growth rate which revealed that the rate had been increasing in each decade showing a positive step towards improving the status of women. Not only in the Public sector but also in the business

enterprises, most of them are run by women specially in the state capital, Aizawl. According to the census collected in 2001, 43.7 percent of the total workers in Mizoram are females, out of which 57.4 percent are from rural areas. She concluded by saying that women as a whole has greatly contributed to the world's economy and its social life which is also true in the case of Mizoram. The writer has made a great and useful study of the contribution of the Mizo women since the time of Union Territory hood upto the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. But many years had passed since then and needs continuation of the study which is covered in the present research.

Lianzela (2009) in his paper ' Position of Mizo Women – Past and Present ' talked about the status of women in the Mizo society stating that in the oldendays, women were looked down upon in the society which is revealed by many sayings among the Mizo people like ' Crabs and women never have any religion ', 'A women's opinion was said to be no opinion at all'. Women were confined to the kitchen and jhum field and had no voice in the day to day affairs of the village. He, then, continued to mention that situations changed with the coming of Christianity in 1894 for the Mizo women. Education became available for women and along with women's literacy came significant achievements of women in various fields, be it public sector or private sector.

The women have also formed a number of state level Non-Governmental Organisations like Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl (1946), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (1975), Young Women's Christian Association (1985), Mizoram Hmeithai Association (1987) and United Mizoram Grassroot Women (2000).

Mizoram Hmeithai Association and MHIP have been blessed with National Award for Child Welfare and National Award for Good Works respectively. The writer also mentions that there were women fellowships in different churches who render useful services to mankind like running of orphanage homes. He concluded by saying that there were a number of positive changes in the position and status of Mizo women but at the same time, closer inspection reveals that there are still lots of things to be done especially in the church and political arena which is very true because the presence of women in the policy making status is almost nil in both the areas.

Singh and Pundir (2002) in their article ‘ Women Legislators in UP – Background, Emergence and Role ’ studied the background, emergence and role of women legislators in Uttar Pradesh. From their study regarding their background, they observed that most of the women legislators are in the mid-age group of 30-39 years which shows that younger women are now entering politics than in the past, among which majority of them are married, mostly educated eventhough they are from different professions. Majority of women legislators have someone from her close relations who are in politics, many of them are widows who have been given party tickets after the death of their husbands. Regarding the role played by women legislators, they have been playing a key role in the linkages between the state and the public. The women legislators have mostly concentrated themselves in the general developmental works like water supply, electricity, schools. The study also revealed that the Scheduled Caste women legislators are usually working for the social justice of their own caste and for getting them grants. The women legislators, as a whole are not much involved in their party regarding decision makings but are



more or less loyal to their parties as defections are hardly seen among women. Moreover, the study concludes that the frequency of raising issues, moving resolutions and initiating discussions depended upon the women members in terms of time and experience in politics. The study is a relevant and informative study which can be of great use for researchers but at the same time, the area of study is too narrow as it covers only one of the many Indian states.

Jinee Lokaneeta (2000) in her work ‘ Women Empowerment : Redifining Agenda ’ has mentioned that the right to participation in politics was the result of the struggle of women during the National Movement but despite this right, the Indian women still remain a marginalised force in the representative institutions. This is one parameter which shows the patriarchal nature of the Indian society and the political parties of today who all claimed to be committed to gender equality but in reality are just hollow claims as women are not allowed to participate in decision-making within their own party structures by most of the political parties. The writer also observed that the dismal representation of women in the representative institutions strongly reveals the patriarchal values on the part of political parties towards the question of women empowerment. She further continued felt that the women in the parties themselves were also responsible for the less involvement within the party as they uncritically accepted their party’s theoretical commitment to women’s political participation despite the party’s inability to increase it within its structures of decision – making.

N. Chatterji (1975) in her work compiled together as ‘ The Earlier Mizo Society ’ had examined the status of Mizo woman in the Early Mizo Society starting from

their birth upto their adulthood. She mentioned that in the Mizo society, birth of a girl child brings equal joy to parents as that of boys and are equally brought up with same treatment during their childhood. During the courtship days too, young women were much free to entertain the young men of their choice when they came to court them which used to result in fixing of their marriage soon after thus, showing her independence in choosing her life partner. The author further said that even in the Mizo Marriage, women were greatly protected through their marriage price which at times were not paid in full at the time of marriage as it was a huge sum of money during those days resulting in the advantage of the wife and her family. One point worth mentioning which the writer pointed out is that concubines were given an almost equal position as that of the regular wife in the society as they were entitled to the same price. Women's status in the Mizo society received proper recognition mostly in view of her ability to bear child is another point given by the author. Although the writer has mentioned in her writings that the status of Mizo woman was quite secure and well protected in the society, she could not deny the fact that Mizo woman did not have security in terms of property ownership as she never enjoyed property right even over her earnings in her house. In addition to this, the womenfolk had no say in the affairs of the village which was solely in the hands of men headed by the chief just because women were considered not to have any concrete ideas and were to be overviewed. This also seems to be applicable in the present Mizo society as one takes a glimpse of the position of women in the decision – making bodies of the state.

Lalfakzuali (2010) in her research work ‘ Changing Position of Mizo Women ’ has conducted a study of the position of Mizo women in the society at large and came to the conclusion that with the change of time, the position of Mizo women has also changed positively, after examining and comparing the role played by the Mizo women in the past and in the modern Mizo society. She studied the position of women in various aspects of life from the public to the private sphere, from rural to urban areas, from economic position to political position and considered them favourable. However, there are some areas in which there is much absence of women especially in the decision- making level which needs to be considered upon like the political field and this is what the research has taken up. Moreover, the data that had been used in this research seems outdated and many years had since passed after the research was carried out which thus makes it necessary to conduct new studies.

Lalthansangi Ralte (2013) in her paper ‘ Woman in Mizo Society: An Outlook based on Masculinity vis-a-vis Femininity ’ talks about the role concept played by the men and women in the Mizo Society, men were expected to be brave and strong while women were to be meek and submissive. She even cited some of the Mizo folktales which portrays Mizo women as objects meant to serve and satisfy the needs of men, how even ugly but witty men could capture the hearts of beautiful damsels whose beauty were legendary thus portraying women as beautiful but dumb and vain. However, present position of women has risen to such importance that they had become part and parcel in various aspects of society which may be attributed to the spread of Christianity in the Hills. Along with Christianity came the system of education which greatly paved the way for women’s liberation. The paper is a very

useful and uncommon way of depicting the real low position of women in the Mizo society despite the burden of work performed by them in their everyday lives.

Although there are some related works done on the role of women in politics, area-wise participation on the basis of urban-rural dichotomy have not been studied at all. So, participation of women in the political system of Mizoram, the similarities and dissimilarities between the urban and rural women electorates, their level of participation, is what the research has taken up. The research further studied the status and performance of the women political leaders who have played their role in the governance of the state of Mizoram.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Even after more than seventy years of democratic governance, it is distressing that the government and the policy makers are lulled into complacency to effect changes in the society. History shows that women did not occupy any place in the political arena and even in the political parties as decision-making partners which makes women's role in the sphere of decision-making insignificant and their numbers have not increased over the years. The question why women play only a marginal role in politics, despite the legal guarantees, is a big question which needs to be explored even after many studies have dwelt upon the issue.

Although there have been researches conducted in political science dealing with the study of the differences in urban and rural conditions and the effect these differences have on political behavior. Most of the data collected for the various research programmes on political participation are well-balanced and spread over various

regions categorised according to economic development, but there has been no systematic comparison of women respondents from the urban and rural areas, particularly Mizoram.

Looking at Mizoram, traditionally, Mizo society is patriarchal in nature where male sections dominate the society. Women, therefore, are considered subordinate to males and are confined to do household chores. In the olden days, the women folks never had any say in the village administration as they were expected not to interfere in any of the village affairs. They were also debarred from exercising the right to succeed. In spite of this, there were instances where women succeeded their deceased husbands on the throne and they became rulers or chieftainesses, not as a matter of right but as a matter of chance. Yet, they proved that they were equally competent as their husbands whom they succeeded. With the passage of time, this kind of attitude slowly diminished. The gradual shift in the pattern of society resulted in the increasing role of women that also included a political dimension.

Still, the performance of women in politics is comparatively very less regarding the number of candidates and their involvement in political process as a whole. To involve more women into the hitherto male dominant arena of politics, legal and political awareness need to be promoted amongst women. A significant effort in this regard is to encourage women to take leadership position in political parties, for which support structures has to be set up so that their familial and other social responsibilities could be met with. The need of the day is to have a thorough survey on women's political participation in the Mizo society. An effective comparison of the level of participation of urban and rural women electorates and to suggest any

possibilities for women to take part in the governance in the state through political participation is necessary. Hence, the research investigation try to find out possibilities for the said purpose and analyze systematically the problems and prospects.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study the nature of political participation of women in Mizoram since statehood
2. To examine the factors that affected the participation of women in the political process of Mizoram
3. To analyze the influence of church and civil society organizations on women's political participation
4. To compare the political participation of women in urban and rural areas
5. To study the status and performance of women political leaders in Mizoram

## HYPOTHESES

1. Participation of Mizo women in political process is relatively minimal
2. Educated women participate more actively in different political activities
3. Church and civil society organizations act as important agents of political socialization of women in Mizoram
4. Urban women are more politically conscious than the rural women
5. Although women are interested in political process, they are unable to play their due role in electoral politics

## METHODOLOGY

The research is largely explorative and based on empirical data. It was carried out using different methods of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Both primary and secondary sources were used.

Most part of the research was carried out by using primary sources, which include collection of data through questionnaires, personal interviews consisting of both structured and unstructured interviews and informal discussions with leaders and members of women's organizations in the urban and rural areas, both within and outside the political parties.

Questionnaire : For the collection of primary data, extensive field work was conducted in various parts of the state covering both urban and rural areas where stratified random type of sampling method was applied. Besides the personal interview and informal discussions held with women politicians and legislators, there were two hundred respondents from the structured questionnaire which consists of women leaders from different parts of the state from different walks of life, political as well as non-political, ordinary women and twenty men to make the sample more inclusive. The structured questionnaire consisted of thirty simple questions to be answered easily and comfortably by the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed to all parts of the state, from the northern-end down to the southernmost part of the state including the areas under the three autonomous district councils. An additional ten questions meant for the women members of Aizawl Municipal Council, Local Councils and Village Councils were also included in the questionnaire.

Questionnaire was distributed to men and women of 25 years and above and was primarily targeted towards women who are leaders in various fields, political as well as non-political. There were 6.89 % of respondents between 25-35 years, 29.3 % between 36-45 years, 32.18 % between 46-55 years, 25.86 % between 56-65 years and 5.74 % above 66 years. Among the male respondents, 40 % belonged to 25-35 years, 20% between 36-45 years, 35 % between 46-55 years and another 5 % above 66 years of age. The respondents consisted mainly of women as the research aims at learning the form and extent of participation of women in politics. It consisted of 90 % female and 10 % male respondents.

The respondents may be divided into five groups, the first group consisting of those who studied upto Class-IX and below, the second group consisting of those who passed matriculate, the third group consisted of those who passed Class- XII, the fourth group consisting of graduates and the last group consisting of post-graduate and above. There were 51.74 % who were under matriculate, 28.48 % of those who were matriculate, 7.55 % of Class-XII passed, another 7.55 % of graduates and 4.65% of post- graduate and above among the women respondents. Among the male respondents, 15 % were under-matriculate, 10 % were matriculate, another 10 % were Class-XII passed, 50 % were graduates from different streams and 15 % were Post-graduates. Majority of the women respondents were leaders in various fields ranging from political leaders to women's wing of the different denominations of the Church and other non-governmental organisations.



Interview : The researcher has also conducted personal interview with several women political leaders, ex-ministers as well as other persons from different walk of life like ordained minister of church, church elder, civil pensioner and others.

In the case of secondary sources, the study is based on records, documents and publications of government, books, journals, newspapers (local and national), unpublished theses and dissertations, internet-based web sources, seminar presentations, television programmes including group discussions and other programmes relating with the research topic. The government documents needed for the research were obtained from the library of the Mizoram State Legislative Assembly Secretariat and the Office of the State Election Commission as well as the Directorate of Election Commission of India.

## CHAPTERIZATION

### Chapter I : Introduction

The first chapter covers the introduction including the meaning and types of political participation in general and that of women in particular, significance of the study, review of the literature consisting of the review of different works dealing with political participation of women, statement of the problem, the various objectives of the study, hypotheses, methodology adopted for the conduct of the research and the chapterization.

### Chapter II : Political Process in Mizoram : Historical and Socio-Economic Context and Status of Women

This chapter discusses about the history, society and polity of Mizoram. It provides theoretical and historical context to the understanding of socio-economic and educational status of women in the state. It includes a description of the political history of the state, its formation into a District Council, then into a Union Territory and finally into one of the states of Indian Union. It also highlights the status of women in the society, the role that they played in the family and in the society at large.

### Chapter III : Women and Political Participation

This chapter is a study of the nature of political participation of women in the different countries of the world and in India in general and then Mizoram in particular. It examines their social position and political role since statehood. An analytical study of women's political problems and various issues confronting women's political and electoral participation are covered.

### Chapter IV: Role of Church and Civil Society Organisations

This chapter deals with the role of church and civil society organizations in affecting political participation of women and also their positive and negative implications in the state. As it is a well-known fact that the Church played an important role in the lives of the Mizo people, it tries to study the extent to which the Church plays in the political lives of women. The chapter also deals with the civil society organisations functioning in the state and their role in affecting the political participation of women.

## Chapter V : Urban – Rural Dimensions of Political Participation

This chapter discusses the participation of rural and urban women in politics, their similarities and differences in the mode and extent of participation both at the state and local levels of political process. It dwells upon the turn-out of female voters in the two areas, comparing the numerical strength of the women candidates from the urban as well as rural areas and the various activities that they performed in the political process.

## Chapter VI : Status and Performance of Women Political Leadership

This chapter evaluates the nature and status of women who have contested and won in the various elections that had taken place in the state since statehood to the recent legislative Assembly elections as well as in elections to the local governments in the state.

## Chapter VII : Conclusion

The last chapter covers the summary of findings and concluding remarks about women's political participation at different levels in the urban and rural areas of Mizoram and suggestions for further studies.

To sum up, the chapter gives an introduction to the study of political participation and tries to analyse the status and role of women in the Mizo society as a whole. It particularly focus on the participation of women in the political process in the state, the factors that support or hinder their participation as well as the role performance of the women political leaders in Mizoram.



## CHAPTER – II

### POLITICAL PROCESS IN MIZORAM : HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND STATUS OF WOMEN

For the understanding of political participation and political process in Mizoram, it is necessary to have a clear perception of the history, society and polity of Mizoram. The chapter deals with the Mizo society, its patriarchal nature and the role of men and women in it. It also concerned itself particularly with the understanding of socio-economic and educational status of women in the state. In order to gain knowledge on the political involvement of women and the role they play once they occupy position of the political leaders, it is necessary to have an indepth knowledge of the status of Mizo women in the society, their political, economic and religious role.

The North East India (NEI) lies between 21°58'N and 24°35' N latitudes and 92°15'E and 93°29'E longitudes with a land area of 2,55,036 km<sup>2</sup> and a population density of 52 per Square Kilometers according to 2011 census. The North-East India is a frontier tract being bounded on all sides by foreign countries, Bhutan and China lies in its north and north east, Myanmar on the south-east and Bangladesh on the south and south-west except for a narrow corridor of about 60 km width which connects it with West Bengal and through it with the rest of India. The North East

India is often referred to as the homeland of a large India, the North East alone has about 145 small and large tribal communities recognised as scheduled tribes.<sup>1</sup>

Mizoram lies in the southernmost corner of North-East India. Mizoram is one of the eight states (including Sikkim) of north-east India, bordered by Myanmar to its east and south, Bangladesh to its west and the states of Manipur, Assam and Tripura to its north. The Mizo Hills, which dominate the states topography, rise to more than 2000 metres (6560 ft) near the Myanmar border. Aizawl, the state capital, is 1220 m (4000ft) above sea level. The Tropic of Cancer runs through the heart of Mizoram, and hence it has a pleasantly temperate climate throughout the year. The hills are steep and are separated by rivers which flow either northwards or to the south, and create deep gorges between the hill ranges.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the rivers are hardly navigable even for country boats except during the monsoons where the rivers swell rapidly but at the same time, water recedes rapidly during the dry season when the rain stops thus making them unnavigable. Mizoram's highest peak, the Blue Mountain also known as Phawngpui, located in the southern part of the land, rises to a height of 2165 m. All sides of the hills are covered with dense forests and bamboo jungles. But due to the practice of shifting cultivation resulting in the clearing of forests, many of the forests have been reduced to vast barren lands.

The flat lands are mostly located in the eastern part of Mizoram, in places like Champhai and Vanlaiphai. The total area of Mizoram is 21,087 sq km and the total

---

<sup>1</sup> Bimal K Kar, *Women Population of North East India: A study in Gender Geography*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2002, p.38

<sup>2</sup> Jagadish K Patnaik and Lalthakima, Mizoram: A Profile in Jagadish K Patnaik (ed.), *Mizoram: Dimensions and Perspectives-Society, Economy and Polity*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2008, p.2

population is 10,97,206 (2011) out of which 5,55,339 are male and 5,41,867 are female. The literacy rate of Mizoram is 91.33 % according to 2011 census.<sup>3</sup>

Mizoram has a mild climate, being relatively cool in summer 20<sup>0</sup>C to 29<sup>0</sup>C with winter temperature ranging from 7<sup>o</sup> to 22<sup>o</sup>C. It thus enjoys a fairly pleasant weather by being not too cold in winter and not too hot in summer with only slight changes in the temperature. The region is influenced by monsoons, raining heavily from May to September with little rain in the dry season. Spring generally starts from February and lasts till the middle of April, winter starts from November and usually ends in the mid of February which brings frost in some places which have higher altitude but snowfall does not occur in any part of the state. But at the same time, frozen dews are found in many parts of the state during winter season.

Mizoram, previously known as the Lushai Hills, was annexed by the British during the years 1890-91. It was administered by the British government till the Indian Independence in 1947. The British made use of the already existing chiefship to administer the land by involving themselves only on grave matters. The Mizo people were not allowed to take part in any kind of political activities as long as they were under the British. On the eve of Indian Independence, they were allowed to form political parties which resulted in the formation of the first political party known as the Mizo Union on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1946.

After Independence, the Lushai Hills became one of the districts of Assam and was granted the status of a District Council under the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution and came to be known as the Lushai District Council and Pawi- Lakher

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.mapsofindia.com/mizoram](http://www.mapsofindia.com/mizoram)

Regional Council in the southern part of the land. Later on, in 1954, the name was changed into the Mizo District Council under the first government formed by the Mizo Union party in the district.<sup>4</sup> The Mizo District Council was elevated into a status of Union Territory on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972 with a state legislature consisting of 33 members, 30 elected and 3 nominated seats. After functioning as a Union Territory for 15 years, Mizoram was granted statehood on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1987 as a result of the Peace accord signed between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front. It has established a state legislature consisting of 40 elected seats with no nominated seat.

Mizoram had eight districts with 23 notified towns and 830 villages, these villages include 704 inhabited and 126 uninhabited villages. Eight districts of the state are Aizawl, Lunglei, Kolasib, Champhai, Mamit, Serchhip, Siaha and Lawngtlai districts. Out of the eight districts, Aizawl is the most populated with 3,14,754 persons while Mamit has the least number with only 14,899 in the whole district. Very recently, the existing government has formed three new districts in 2019 namely, Khawzawl District, Saitual District and Hnahthial District. Thus, the number of districts in Mizoram has risen to 11. However, statistics regarding the three new districts are not yet available.

---

<sup>4</sup> R.N Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987, p.103



Table – 2.0 District-Wise Number of Literates and Literacy Rate

Sl. No	District	Number of Literates			Literacy Rate		
		Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1	Mamit	60,191	32,977	27,214	84.93	89.13	80.35
2	Kolasib	65,895	34,147	31,748	93.50	94.57	92.38
3.	Aizawl	340,595	169,547	171,048	97.89	98.11	97.67
4	Champhai	100,802	51,440	49,362	95.91	97.21	94.59
5	Serchhip	54,476	27,598	26,878	97.91	98.28	97.53
6	Lunglei	121,122	64,515	56,607	88.86	92.04	85.49
7	Lawngtlai	62,861	36,444	26,417	65.88	74.12	57.12
8	Saiha	42,233	21,861	20,372	90.01	92.64	87.34
	Total	848,175	438,529	409,646	91.33	93.35	89.27

Source : Directorate of Census Operations, Mizoram

Looking at Table- 2.0, it is noticed that the female literacy percentage in Mizoram was much lower as compared to those of males with a difference of 4.08 % which adversely affect the political participation of women in the area. This has also been found to be true in other states of India as well.

The Mizo people themselves do not have any written history regarding their origin, so oral history was the only source that could be accessed. Their customs and traditions were passed on from the fore- fathers to their descendants. One who does not act according to what the elders say is regarded as an anti-social.<sup>5</sup> According to the writings that were found regarding the history of the Mizo people, the Mizo are

<sup>5</sup>Challiana,Pastor, *Pi PU Nun*, Lalrinliana and Sons, Aizawl, Reprint, 1990, p.1

descendants of the Mongols belonging to the Tibeto – Burman tribe. The Mongols are people with short and stout body with straight black hair and high cheekbones which can be identified with the Mizo. Their legs are generally short and their arms are long in comparison to the length of their bodies. The women appear more squat than the men but are strong and lusty.<sup>6</sup> The hair is worn in a knot over the nape of the neck by both sexes, carefully parted in the middle.<sup>7</sup> They have been grouped into the Tibeto – Burman race because of their language and the flow of their speech.

According to the Mizo tradition, the Mizo came out of a very big ‘stone cave’ known as ‘*Chhinlung*’ which has been mentioned in many Mizo folksongs.<sup>8</sup> They are believed to have migrated to their present inhabitant after moving downward from the Southern China to Chin Hills in Burma and finally to the present Mizoram in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Mizo historians believed that the Mizo people migrated in three groups from Chin Hills in Burma towards the western direction and then to the present Mizoram, Tripura, Assam and Manipur. The first batch consisted of various tribes like Hrangkhawl, Darlawng, Biate and Hmar tribes who settled in present Mizoram. But, later on, they were driven out by the second batch of migrators consisting of Thadou, Jangshen and their offshoots. The last batch of migration from the Chin Hills across the Tiau river was that of the Lusei tribe who were believed to have migrated into Mizoram from the later part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century till the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Lt.Col.J.Shakespear, *The Lusei Kuki clans*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2008, p.1

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p.2

<sup>8</sup> K.Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute leh An Thlahtute Chanchin*, Self Published, Aizawl, 1993, p.5

<sup>9</sup>Lalzarzoa, *Migration of Mizo Tribes : A brief Overview* in Malsawmdawnglana and Rohmingmawii (Eds.) *Mizo Narratives : accounts from Mizoram*, Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2014, pp 24-25

It is also believed that the system of chiefship was established during their stay in the Chin Hills of Burma. The Hnamte clan of Lusei tribe invited Zahmuaka and his six sons, Zadenga, Paliana, Thangluaha, Thangura, Rivunga and Rokhuma to become their chief and rule over them as they needed care and protection from their enemies.<sup>10</sup> At first, Zahmuaka declined the invitation, but his wife, Lawileri convinced him to become their chief by saying, “ If we, humblest of all people are invited, it is right to accept their request.” So, Zahmuaka became the first Mizo chief and the most powerful chief clan, i.e the Sailo clan emerged from Sailova, the grandson of Zahmuaka whose father’s name was Thangura. Sailova had a son named Chhungnunga, who ruled over 7000 houses at a place called Selesih and it was Chhungnunga’s ability which paved the way for Sailo’s greatness.<sup>11</sup> The descendents of the six brothers fought against one another for power and jurisdiction which drove away the less powerful tribes out of their way and the Sailo clan emerged as the most powerful amongst them.

Society and Women : The Mizo society is a patriarchal society which literally means a male dominated society. In this society, descendance, inheritance, succession, authority and residence are in the hands of male members of the family. Thus, man has more authority and power to exercise in all matters and issues which demand change. Lushai has been, and still is, a country for men before it is one for women, or even for children.<sup>12</sup> This is clearly reflected in the old Mizo sayings like, ‘A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be’, ‘ Crab’s meat is no meat as a woman’s word is no word’, ‘ Bad wife and bad fence can be replaced ’

---

<sup>10</sup> Zatlunga, *Mizo Chanchin*, Directorate of Art and Culture, Mizoram, 1996, p.115

<sup>11</sup> AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, p 26, Firma KLM Private Ltd. Calcutta, 1949, p.26

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

and ‘ Unthreatened wife and unthreatened grass of the field are both unbearable ’.<sup>13</sup> In the Mizo family, women were and still are looked down upon where they are expected to perform all the household chores without expecting any help from their husbands. If the husband helps the wife, he is regarded as hen-pecked, at the same time, if the same man helps a woman outside his home, he is regarded as having a virtuous life helping the lady in distress. This resulted in the husband always trying to show his authority within his family by not helping his wife even in times of need. Mizo women were not involved in decision-making in their own households, be it a matter of their own children’s marriage or in case of selling of their own domestic animals like pigs and the like.<sup>14</sup> Even if the women works like machines from dawn to dusk, the men never bothered to show their gratitude to their wives. B.Sangkhumi, former President of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the biggest women organisation in the state, expressed the position of the Mizo women as follows, “A Mizo woman has never had any rights over property whether moveable, immoveable or even gifts, known as ‘*bungrua*’ in local language, that are given to her at the time of marriage. Her husband can divorce her at any time and throw her out of the house without providing any financial support”.<sup>15</sup> This statement made by a woman leader clearly reflects the status and condition of Mizo woman in the family which is more or less the same in a wider perspective i.e society.

In the past Mizo society, it was realised that women were the weaker sex (in terms of physical strength) and needed protection by men. Henceforth, proper system of

---

<sup>13</sup> Irene Colbert, *Women and Politics in Mizoram: An Indepth Study*, Unpublished Thesis, 2010

<sup>14</sup>R.Vanhnuaitanga, *Zalenna Thurin Leh Mizo Hmeichhiate*, Lengchhawn press, Aizawl, 2007, pp.46,47

<sup>15</sup>[www.thebetterindia.com](http://www.thebetterindia.com) accessed on 26/2/2019

division of labour was practised. It was the responsibility of women to make available husked rice for cooking, whereas it was men's responsibility to harvest enough rice for his family for the whole year. Clothing and bedding are in the hands of women while the instruments for making these are to be provided by the men. Home-making was the responsibility of women but house-making was the duty performed by men. Looking after children and domestic animals was in women's hands but the safety of the family and the community/village was the men's responsibility. Women were supposed to fetch water from the nearby pond and firewood from the nearby forests while the tools for fetching these were to be made available by men.<sup>16</sup> Thus, household chores were supposed to be performed by female members in the family and the male members specially the head of family never used to involve himself in the domestic works in and around the house but at the same time makes all the decisions regarding the family.

The unmarried womenfolk, in between their daily household chores also cleans cotton flowers which they gather from the cotton field, dye them into different colours as required and spin them on the spinning wheel which is mainly done at night while entertaining men who came to court them at night. They could not show favour to any particular man, not even to their boyfriends and had to sit up even till late at night to converse pleasantly with all the men until they all left for home to rest. If a man was not happy with the behaviour of a girl, he would go back to the *zawlbuk* (bachelor's dormitory) collect his friends and tear down the verandah of the girl's house in which case even the chief had no say in the matter and the girl's father

---

<sup>16</sup>B.Lalthangliana, *India, Burma & Bangladesh a Mizo Chanchin*, Aizawl, 2001, pp.384-386

had to offer a pot of rice beer to calm down the young boys.<sup>17</sup> The women look after the children, fetch water and firewood, takes care of pounding rice for the family, see that the family had enough clothing by weaving and stitching garments as well as a blanket known as '*Pawnpui*' for the family's bedding.

The men construct, and repair the house, make all the necessary equipment available for the women, protect the home and family, protect the village from wild animals and enemies. Women also took up laborious work like men in the cultivation of land except in the toughest work in cultivation, i.e cutting down of forest, known in Mizo language as '*Lo vah*'. The only criticism which the west can fairly make is that the men, who have been relieved of much of their indigenous and traditional tasks, have not adequately taken away from their women some of their tasks, as they should have done, in view of the increased demands made by life upon the women, under the more settled conditions of today.<sup>18</sup> Other than the above mentioned work, women perform all types of work that their menfolk would perform and can be considered as equal partners in the economic activities even in the early Mizo society. In actual practice, however, the division of labour, certainly under the present-day conditions, is so much against the women that they could rarely claim any leisure at all.<sup>19</sup> Besides her busy schedule and absence of frequent leisure time, the Mizo woman had to perform arduous hazard of child birth which she faced cheerfully and courageously in the absence of modern amenities, during the previous days. Except on the day of delivery, the Mizo mother looks after her newly born baby herself,

---

<sup>17</sup>B.Lalrinchhani, *A gender study of the Socio-Economic History of the Early Mizo* in Sangkima (Ed) *A Modern History of Mizoram*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2004, p.37

<sup>18</sup> Major AC McCall, *The Lushai Chrysalis*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1949, p.177

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p.174

washing both herself and the baby. She does not willingly rest even on account of her delivery and went about her ordinary household duties the very day after delivery unless she is in serious pains.<sup>20</sup>

The unmarried girls in the family play enormous role. Early in the morning at dawn, they go to fetch water from the pond for their family consumption, after returning they husk the paddy by pounding them. After this, they continue preparing breakfast for the family and waited on the others while having food till the last person gets up, they clear the dishes and straightaway prepare themselves to go to jhum. Even when they are relieved from jhum works, they collect firewood from the forest and after returning from the same, they continue with their cotton works. Every woman was expected to know how to weave and hence it was an essential qualification for women.<sup>21</sup> By evening time, they prepare food for the whole family and then right after dinner, after clearing the dishes, they put the pot of pigfeed on the hearth and attend to it and continue to work on their charkha while entertaining the boys who visit to court them at night. Even when they are busy doing the above mentioned works the whole day, whenever they are asked how they spend their days, they always reply that they had not done much work that day.

The unmarried girls were responsible for the family clothing and it was a great prestige for girls who can make their brothers wear new clothes very often. They were also in-charge of the family laundry by washing all the dirty clothes in the village pond. The unmarried girls also had the duty to collect rice and firewood for

---

<sup>20</sup> SHM Rizvi, Shibani Roy, *Mizo Tribes of North East India*, BR Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 2006, p.97

<sup>21</sup> Tribal Research Institute, *Mizo Women Today*, Aizawl, 1991, p.9

the bereaved family whenever there is a death in the village. They always lend helping hands by pounding and sifting rice or collecting water for the family while the men dug the grave and provide other support. In times of sickness or ill-health, the unmarried girls never complain about their health and continue with their tiresome duties for their family unless they are bed-ridden as it was considered shameful for a girl to be ill. Pottery was also a women's work which was done by digging clay from the riverbanks and molding them into different shapes and sizes according to the needs of the family. The women also had the duty to provide 'tuibur' for the adults which is prepared by smoking pipes which pass through a small container with water thus turning the water into nicotine water which is consumed by the adults, both male and female.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the women had a hazardous duty of smoking pipes irrespective of their likes or dislikes and which could even damage their health.

Even as children, the Mizo girls perform more work than the boys during their childhood. The girls started to learn all the domestic works that they were expected to perform right from their early childhood. They learn to carry babies by playing with their dolls, learn to carry water on their backs and also learn to husk and clean the rice by sifting the sand. When they become six to seven years old, they learn to weave by tying small cotton threads discarded by their mothers and weave them on their toy weaving tools. As soon as they were able to carry two bamboo tubes, they start fetching water from the village water pond. They also fetch small branches of dry wood from the nearby forest for cooking. Besides all the above-mentioned tasks, the girls also babysit their baby brothers and sisters if they have one. There is a very

---

<sup>22</sup> Lalfakzuali, *Changing Position of Mizo Women*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 2010, p.6



popular saying, “ It is a blessing to have female as firstborn child ” the reason for which is no other than their usefulness for the family from their childhood. Thus, from their early childhood, the females in the Mizo society perform enormous tasks in their family. In the past Mizo society, there were three positions or status that were highly admired by the people including the chief himself which are firstly *Pasaltha*<sup>23</sup>, secondly *Val upa*<sup>24</sup> and thirdly, *Nopui Dawm*<sup>25</sup>. It is impossible for the Mizo women to achieve any of the above positions.

The Mizo women did not take part in the religious functions in the previous society but at the same time, there are several social occasions or festivals where women festively took part in them. One such occasion was the return of the male hunters from the raiding expeditions with heads of their vanquished where the women greeted them with a particular cloth known as *Arkeziak* specially woven for such type of victory. They also take part in social festivities like ‘*Khuangchawi*’, ‘*Chawngchen*’ where the unmarried women and small girls enjoyed great freedom. They also participated in various festivals like ‘*Chapcharkut, Pawl kut and Mimkut*’ in which the girls sang and danced with the boys. For the preparation of these occasions, the girls along with the boys would collect firewood, fetch water and pound rice for the preparation of feast during the festivals.<sup>26</sup> The women even had access to the rice beer that used to be served on these festivals but no sane woman would get drunk as it was very inappropriate for women to drink too much. Another

---

<sup>23</sup> A Mizo word equivalent to knights who are brave men in terms of hunting wild animals as well as in the various wars that used to be fought against other villages

<sup>24</sup> Leaders of the Mizo lads who achieved their position due to hard work and industry

<sup>25</sup> A big cup containing Mizo traditional rice beer which was used to be offered to honour persons who have made great achievements and this applied only for men

<sup>26</sup>Lalsangpuii, *Position of women in Mizo society*, Harendra Sinha and B.Lalrinchhani (eds.), *Women in Mizo Society*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2013, p 46

ceremony was performed by a widow after her husband's burial known as '*Thlaichhiah*' to speed up the departing soul on his way to paradise. This was performed by killing a pig and a dog. After that ceremony, a wife would then perform '*Thlahual*' in her husband's house by killing and eating a fowl given to her by her maternal uncle for that purpose. She then would keep aside a portion of rice from each meal for three months for her husband's spirit.<sup>27</sup>

In the early Mizo society, social stratification was found which was mainly based on the division of functions except for the position of the chief. Each Mizo village was a separate state, ruled over by its own Lal or chief. So, at the top of the social hierarchy was the chief who was all in all for the village. In the beginning, the chieftainship was adopted by people for the purpose of being guided, governed and protected by the chief in all activities of life. But then, with the passage of time, it became hereditary. Each son of a chief, except for the youngest, after attaining a marriageable age, was married off and given certain number of households from his father's village and then sent to a separate village to start his own chiefdom in that village and thus, became responsible for the success and failure of his administration. The chief performed all the administrative, legislative and judicial functions in the village. As such he was responsible for the proper administration of the village, obedience of the law, customary as well as enacted, by the people, ensurance of justice, protection of the village and so on. In return for his service, each household in the village used to pay taxes in terms of rice (*fathang*), meat (*sa chhiah*), salt (*chi*

---

<sup>27</sup>Lalfakzuali, *Changing Position of Mizo Women*, Tribal Research Institute, Art and Culture Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 2010, pp.7-8

*chhiah*), honey (*khuai chhiah*).<sup>28</sup> The chief ruled his village according to the customary law of the people. The next in line after the chief came the *Khawnbawl Upa* who were appointed by the chief and constituted the chief's council. Unlike the chief, the post of *Upa* is not hereditary but depended upon their wit and their contributions to the village. The chief and his council of elders constitute the administrative body of the village.

The other officials in the traditional Mizo village were *Ramhual* and *Zalen* who were experts in the jhum cultivation and helped the chief in selection of jhum fields and by providing paddy for supporting needy families in assistance of the chief.<sup>29</sup> Besides the above, the other important officials were *Puithiam*, *Thirdeng* and *Tlangau* where *puithiam* was the village priest, *thirdeng* was the village blacksmith and *tlangau* was the village crier. The blacksmith receives one basket of rice from each house-holder whose tools he repairs, the priest also receives the same amount from each house-holder for whom he performs the sacrifices connected with his cultivation. The village crier proclaims the chief's orders with his high-pitched voice after dark when everybody is at home. Looking at all the above officials in the traditional Mizo village, none of the offices had been occupied by women except of the chief's where women could be found in rare occasions due to the demise of their husbands (chiefs).

There were also other privileged classes in the Mizo society which were based not on caste or class as usually found in other parts of India, but on the performance of individuals. They were *Pasaltha* and *Thangchhuahpa* who were either great hunters

---

<sup>28</sup> R.N Prasad, *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987, p.49

<sup>29</sup> N.Chatterji, *The Earlier Mizo Society*, Tribal Research Institute, Art and Culture Department, Aizawl, 1975, p.43

or persons who possessed enormous wealth in terms of domestic animals by feeding the whole village as required by tradition. In the case of *Thangchhuahpa*, there were two types of *Thangchhuah*, the first one was *Inlama thangchhuah* in which the person has to be very wealthy so as to be able to feed the whole village for a week by killing at least two mithuns and a pig and enough *zu* (rice beer). This had to be performed three times in his lifetime after which a special ceremony called *sechhun* was to be performed by killing another mithun, then only the person attained the title *Thangchhuahpa* and his wife *Thangchhuahnu*. Here, the wife also receives the same title as her husband which is very uncommon among the Mizo but at the same time, no woman by herself can perform this type of ceremony or attain this title alone by herself even if she possesses enormous wealth. A great hunter may also become a *Thangchhuahpa* by killing animals like a wild boar, a bear, a stag, a deer, a wild mithun, a hawk and a viper to guard him on his way to *Pialral* (paradise).<sup>30</sup>

Another important man in the Mizo society is the *Val Upa* who is the leader of the youth who attained his title due to his commendable activities and sacrifices for the welfare of the community. He is greatly respected by the villagers.<sup>31</sup> Mention may be made that the title of *Val Upa* is for males only and no such parallel title exist for women who excel in various activities. Many privileges were not there for the women to achieve higher social status to surpass their male counterparts.<sup>32</sup> In the traditional Mizo society, neither a girl has share in her father's property nor does a woman has in her husband's property except in trust of her children. During the term

---

<sup>30</sup>K.Zawla, *Mizo Pi Pute leh an thlahte chanchin*, Self Published, Aizawl, 1993, p.35

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Lalrinmawii Rokhum, "Social Stratification of the Mizos", *Mizo Narratives : Accounts from Mizoram* opcit. p.41

<sup>32</sup>B.Lalrinchhani, "A Gender Study of the Socio-Economic History of the Early Mizo", *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol. II, Issue II, p.16

of the first Mizo District Council, mild modification was made by the ruling Mizo Union Party which passed a new act allowing girl child to inherit her father's property if there is a will written for that purpose. This Law of Inheritance was amended by a legislation passed in the year 2014 according to which a woman is eligible to inherit property.

Mizo are a close-knit society with no class distinction and no discrimination on grounds of sex and their code of ethics emphasizes hospitality, kindness and helpfulness to others. The village exists like a big family, birth of a child, marriage in the village and death of a person in the village or community feast arranged by a person in the village are important occasions in which the whole village is involved.<sup>33</sup> In every village was found one or more women who were experts in helping a mother during her labour and delivery who were known in Mizo word as *nauchharthiam*<sup>34</sup> as there were no doctors or nurses in the olden days. The birth of a girlchild was as joyful as that of a boy which shows that there was no discrimination in sex since the primitive times. The babygirl used to be blessed as 'one who will become beautiful and intelligent costing a mithun' and the baby-boy was made to hold a dhao (*chem*) and blessed to become a great hunter who can kill an elephant.

Girls are considered to be cowards having no courage of their own and needed protection by men. As such men should never have anything in common with women, men having the mindset of women are considered as cowards and used to be

---

<sup>33</sup> Chaturbhuj Sahu, *Tribes of North East India*, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, 2002, p.172

<sup>34</sup> Women in the past Mizo society who were gifted without any form of learning or training, the expertise for helping women during their labour and delivery of babies

told to wear women's skirts. Thus, women are considered as great assets if they are beautiful and industrious with skills in cotton-making. If a girl dares to do anything unusual, she is always mocked as, "*Hmeichhia te te si*" which denotes that the girl is being ridiculed for daring to be different.

Marriage is a great affair among the Mizo people and is a great social event which used to involve the whole village. They had been, from time immemorial, very careful in choosing their life partners. Before marriage takes place, each party trace the ancestors of one another in order to make sure that they were fit for the partnership. The Mizo did not like to have relationship with families having unnatural death, petty theft, ill health, evil possession, over-talkativeness. They like to have matrimonial alliances with families who are blessed with their harvest, good-natured, hard-working, healthy, brave hunter in case of men and good talent in cloth-making in case of women. The Mizo people had their own traditional custom of marriage. First of all, when the young boys and girls become of age, courtship used to take place where the young boys visit the girls at their house at night before bedtime. The girls, on their part, receive all the young bachelors welcoming them irrespective of their likes or dislikes. Even at this time of night, the only available light being from the burning logs from the hearth, the young girls did not just laze around, they work with their spinning wheel while cooking food for their domestic pigs which were kept by almost every household. In spite of their busy schedule, it was the duty of the young girls to entertain her visitors so that each and every one of them did not feel left out or lonely, they also provide them local cigarettes by rolling tobaccos with paper and tying them with small threads from their yarn. Courting also

takes place by taking turns in working at their fields whereby a boy and a girl make arrangements so that they would work together in each other's fields in consecutive days. In this way they come to know the industrious and hardworking lads suitable to be their husbands.

After many days and months of courting, if the two lovers decide to get married, according to the custom, the boy after informing his parents about his desire to get married, send intermediaries (*palai*) to the girl's parents to ask for her hands. Two considerations then arise, namely, willingness of the daughter and the price which the suitor or his family is agreeable to pay as the girl's marriage price.<sup>35</sup> If everything goes well, the girl's parents along with the boy's side make arrangements and fix the date of marriage. Thus, it is customary for the boy and his family to pay the bride's price, generally an amount of Rs 420/- but may differ slightly from region to region in Mizoram. On the day fixed, intermediaries precede the bride on behalf of the young groom and make over the agreed portion of the price to the girl's parents.<sup>36</sup> In the earlier days, due to scarcity of money, bride's price was rarely paid in full at the time of marriage and remain unpaid for many years. The Mizo lads from a very young age start to procure money for their bride. As soon as they are able to go to the nearby jungle by themselves, they used to graze and look after the cattle of other families so that after about three years, a young mithun is given to them for their labour and this mithun is kept by them for their bride's price when they grow up.

---

<sup>35</sup> AG McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Firma KLM Pvt.Ltd. Calcutta, 1949, p.101

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, p.102

Another way of accumulating money by the Mizo youth is by travelling to faraway lands to prepare salt which are sold by them to save money for their bride's price.<sup>37</sup>

But matters greatly change in the present days and the bride's price is just a matter of custom as the amount is not much of value nowadays. The bride's price is not to be considered or misunderstood as a form of human trafficking which is found in some parts of the world as it only signifies a sort of security for the young girl and not a mere sale price. The bride's price is divided into two parts, '*manpui*' and '*mantang*'. The bride's price is distributed among relatives who are invited to share the money according to their relationship with the bride. In the past due to scarcity of money, bride's price were not usually paid in full at once but one part of the price '*mantang*' is always expected to be paid as it has to be distributed among the near and dear relatives at the time of payment of the money. The money is distributed to the following people:

1. *Sumhmahruai* : It is the share of the father of the bride amounting to Rs 60/- which he may hand over to his brothers or his married sons already living in separate houses.

2. *Sumfang* : This also a certain amount paid to the bride's father usually Rs 50/- which may be handed over to his brothers or married sons.

3. *Pusum*: Rs 40/- is given to the bride's maternal grandfather or the maternal uncle if the former has died.

---

<sup>37</sup>B.Lalthangliana , *Pi Pu Zumleng*, B.Lalthlengliana, The Government Press, Aizawl, 2007, p.154



4. *Palal* : If the bride belongs to a different village, she used to search for a family with whom she can look up as her own family and stay with them until the marriage takes place. The head of that family ie. the father is given Rs 30/- and he will be responsible for the bride as a real father in that village.

5. *Ni-ar* : A sum of Rs 20/- is used to be given to the bride's paternal aunts, in case the father does not have sisters, other female cousins may also be given this money from the bride's price.

6. *Naupuakpuan* : The bride's elder sisters are also given Rs 20/- for looking after her and carrying her during her younger years. Even if the bride does not have real sisters, other female relatives may be given this money.

Out of the bride's price of Rs 420/-, at the time of payment of the money by the groom's family, an amount of Rs 20/- is used to be returned by the girl's family which is called '*thutphah*' which serve as a security for the bride. As already mentioned before, there was great scarcity of money in the past and the husbands sometimes could not divorce their wives for not being able to return the '*thutphah*' to the wife's family.<sup>38</sup>

Divorce among the Mizo family was not very common in the earlier days in comparison with the modern times. This may be attributed to the fact that the bride's price was an amount so great during those days and it was not easily possible to hand back the money already given to the bride's family either way returning or paying in full. According to the Mizo customary law, there are several ways in which the

---

<sup>38</sup> Mizo Customary Law, Law and Judicial Department, Govt. Of Mizoram, 2006, p.17

husband can divorce his wife. Looking closely at the different system of divorce, one can easily come to know about the status of women in the Mizo Family.

- 1) Mak : If a man divorce his wife on '*mak*' he must pay all her marriage price and the wife can take with her all her personal belongings and her dowry. According to '*mak*', a man could divorce his wife simply by saying ' I divorce you ' and the wife had to leave the house immediately.
- 2) Sumchhuah : If a woman divorces her husband on '*sumchhuah*' she shall take with her all her personal belongings and dowry and return all her marriage price that has been paid.
- 3) Sumlaitan : It is a divorce by mutual agreement of the two parties and thereby the marriage price is shared equally into half by the two sides.
- 4) Peksachang : It is a form of divorce in which the husband will not claim back the marriage price that had been paid, and the wife will not claim the unpaid balance of her marriage price.
- 5) Kawngka-Sula Mak : It literally means divorce in order to marry another wife in which the old wife goes out of the door as the new wife comes in. In this kind of divorce, the divorced wife can have one third of the household produce called '*Bulbal*' which covers paddy and rice, maize and millet.
- 6) Uire : Adultery is considered as the most serious wrong that can be committed by a woman. A woman who has committed adultery must return all her marriage price and shall forfeit all her dowry and properties. Further, even after the death of her husband, if a woman sleeps with

another man before the passage of three months after her husband's death, she was also subjected to the same punishment. If a man commits fornication with another girl, and the wife leaves him, she is entitled to take with her all her properties which she has brought into her husband's house at the time of her marriage. The menfolk were not considered to commit adultery even when they had extra-marital affair as they could not commit adultery according to convention in the Mizo society.

Besides the above, there are also other forms of divorce which involves physical deformities on either side which has not been mentioned. Looking at the various types of divorce one can easily conclude that almost all of these are disadvantageous for the wife. At best, the woman can claim back her dowry and personal belongings and must give up all that she had acquired during the time of her marriage with her husband which clearly reflects the position of women in the Mizo society. In case of death of a husband, Mizo women have the right to re-marry but only after they had completed the various rites and rituals they had to go through for three months. If widow has relationship with another man before three months after the death of her husband, she is considered as committing adultery and should be treated in the same way as if her husband is alive. In the same way, if a widow chose to live in her husband's house and bring up his children, she is still considered as married and if she is suspected of having an affair, her relatives have to refund her marriage price just as if her husband is alive. Thus, Mizo women's right to re-marriage, eventhough is guaranteed but is very much limited at the same time.

Traditional political institutions centered round chiefship to which all the legal authority was attached.<sup>39</sup> The chief was the executive, legislative and judicial head in the village and was thus, all in all in the village administration. The chief usually owns the land or as Stevenson puts it, “the chief is the Lord of the soil”.<sup>40</sup> The chief was assisted by his council of elders. The chief along with his council of elders, administered the village according to the existing Mizo customary law. No woman could become a chieftainess directly but at the same time, one finds a few numbers of Mizo Chieftainesses who had proved their ability to rule their subjects in excellence.

The first woman ruler that could be found among the Mizo was Lalhlupuii, wife of Lalngura, Chief of Sentlang village. She assumed the chieftainship when her husband died in 1855 and reigned as a regent for her son, Vanpuilala who was around 4 or 5 years old. During her regency, she was greatly supported by the council of elders. Vanpuilala did not live long and died at the age of around 20 years only and after which the people became divided between his mother and his widow. Lalhlupuii lived at Darlawn while his widow, Chawngpuituali lived at Khawlian and the two became rivals. The widow of Vanpuilala claimed regency on behalf of her infant son Lalhleia.<sup>41</sup>

Another woman ruler who seemed to have ruled around the same period was Pibuki, a very powerful chieftainess, who was the mother of Suakpuilala. She had also assumed to have greatly helped her husband in ruling his village and then ruled after

---

<sup>39</sup>C.Nunthara, *Mizoram-Society and Polity*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996, p.66

<sup>40</sup>Vumson, *Zo History*, Self Published, Aizawl, Year NA, p 8

<sup>41</sup>Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Spectrums Publications, Guwahati, 2004, p.160

the death of her husband, Mangpawrha, around Durtlang and Muthi villages. She was regarded as a very kind and wise ruler. She had a son Suakpuilala and two daughters, Rothangpuui and Vanhnuaithangi. Even though according to the Mizo custom, only the legitimate son could inherit his father's property, the two daughters also ruled over two separate villages, Muthi and Thilthek respectively. Vanhnuaithangi married Murchuailova, s/o Lalsuthlaha, a famous Palian chief living in Tripura and she became the first Mizo woman to be able to speak in Bengali. It is also reported that Vanhnuaithangi's village encountered with forces of Baker's expedition in 1869 on the bank of Tut river.<sup>42</sup>

As mentioned above, the chiefship was passed on only to the male heir and not to the daughters. One such incident which can be mentioned is the story of Darlalpuui, the daughter of a Palian Chief. The Palian Chief had no legitimate male heir, his chieftom was passed into the hands of Sibuta, his illegitimate son, instead of his legitimate daughter just for being born a female. The chief Sibuta was a man of incorrigible character, as a result of which he even killed his own step-sister Darlalpuui, by piercing her in the heart just as they used to kill their mithuns for ceremonies in front of his villagers after making the young men of the village drag her and flog her just like the way they did to sacrificial animals (mithun).

In the eastern side, the widow of chief Vuta, Neihpuithangi, became a ruler after the death of her husband in 1878 and even took part in the Lushai uprising of 1893-94. She fiercely opposed the British along with her powerful son, Kairuma, until her surrender to protect her subjects. Another famous Mizo chieftainess that we come

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.161

across was Laltheri, whose real name was Lalchawngpuii, daughter of Lalsavunga. She was famous for her beauty and bravery and was not frightened even when her husband, Dingmanga, was murdered by the western Lusei chief. Darbilhi was another important chieftainess who was known for her wit. She inherited her husband's chieftainship and had a friendly relation with the British.

Another women chieftainess that could be mentioned here is Pawngi who ruled over Zatezo village.<sup>43</sup> Her rule over this village is very unique from the others in the sense that she was just a concubine of one Mizo chief named Lalsavunga, at the same time her influence over her husband can be realised from her share of chieftainship. Not only did she rule over a village but also managed to pass her chieftainship to her daughter Thangpuii who ruled the village after her death.

One of the most famous women in the past Mizo society was Lalchawngpuii, famously known as Laltheri. She was the daughter of a powerful chief Lalsavunga and sister of Vanhnuailiana. She was famous for two reasons, one reason being her love-life. During those days, for a chief's daughter to fall in love with a common man was out of the question. But Laltheri courageously continued with her love affair with Chalthanga. Another reason was her great talent in composing songs especially after her father killed her lover. Her brother Vanhnuailiana handed her Darlawng village over whom she ruled with her husband Danmanga and it was assumed that she died at an old age before the British annexed the land.

There is also another woman ruler known as Pakuma Rani, widow of Thangluah chief, Pakuma, who had ruled over the border of Chittagong Hill Tract in South

---

<sup>43</sup>Lalsangzuali Sailo, *Sakhming Chullo*, JBM Publications, Aizawl, 1995, p.47

Mizoram. She was murdered for befriending the British and her village was raided. Her murder was one of the reasons for the Chin-Lushai expedition of 1889-1890 resulting in the annexation of the Lushai Hills.<sup>44</sup>

One more Mizo chieftainess who is very worth mentioning is Ropuiliani. Ropuiliani was the daughter of Lalsavunga, the chief of Aizawl and one of the most famous and greatest chiefs of Mizoram. She married Vandula, the eldest son of Tlutpawrha, a famous chief of South Mizoram.<sup>45</sup> Unlike some of the chiefs and chieftainesses who submitted themselves to the British, she bravely fought the British till her death in prison cell. Ropuiliani was provoked and hardened by the cruel killings of her sons and relatives by the British and thus formed a strong force against the British. Because of her strong anti-British policy, Ropuiliani was charged as a problem chieftainess and accused of playing an influential role in inciting other chiefs of the south. As a result, the British sent an expedition against Ropuiliani and her son Lalthuama in 1893 under the command of Capt.J.Shakespeare where they were arrested and deported to Rangamati on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1894 and remained in prison till her death on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1895.<sup>46</sup> Mention can be made here that Ropuiliani was the first and only Mizo woman who has sacrificed her life for her country.<sup>47</sup>

‘Status’ usually refers to the position or positions which a person, group or community holds in the social structure of a particular society – in its educational

---

<sup>44</sup> Subhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under the British Rule*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, p.139

<sup>45</sup>R. Vanlawma, *The Role of Ropuiliani In The Freedom Struggle in Lalneihzovi* (Ed.) *Role of Ropuiliani In The Freedom Struggle*, Gilzom Offset Press, Aizawl, 2005, p.103

<sup>46</sup>Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Spectrum Publications, Delhi, 2004, p.162

<sup>47</sup>Lalthanliana, *Mizo Chanchin (Kum 1900 Hma Lam)*, The Mizoram Publication Board, Aizawl, 2000, p.423

institutions, in its occupational structure, in its political system, in the family and so on.<sup>48</sup> Thus 'status' in simple words means hierarchical arrangement of positions. When one talk about the status of women, one is talking about the positions held by women of a particular society as a daughter, wife, mother, social worker, political leader, the power and prestige attached to these positions and the rights and duties women are expected to be exercised as the occupant of these positions.<sup>49</sup>

## WOMEN AND EDUCATION

During the pre-British period, the Mizo did not have their own alphabets or written form of their language but the Missionaries dealt with the problem by introducing new alphabets in simple Roman Scripts to construct vocabularies. One of the most important contributions of the Christian missionaries in the Lushai Hills was in the field of education. Previously there were no schools in the Lushai Hills and it was the pioneer missionaries who started the Christian schools. The two pioneer missionaries Rev. Savidge and Rev. Lorrain after formulating the Mizo alphabets by adopting the Roman script, opened the first primary school in Aizawl and invited boys and girls to join it. The work of the missionary was fortunately supported by the administration.<sup>50</sup> But, the duo were called back to Assam and the school was closed down but later on, another missionary, Rev. D.E.Jones revived it in 1898 and it was attended by both boys and girls.<sup>51</sup> Although girls were also admitted and given the same opportunity as boys, the students consisted mainly of boys, for the boys were allowed more

---

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Report, *Status of Women and Family Planning*, New York : Department of Economics and Social Welfare, 1975

<sup>49</sup> Dharam Vir and Kamlesh Mahajan, (Eds.) *Women's Movements: Politics and Awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006

<sup>50</sup>Vumson, *Zo History*, Self Published, p.301

<sup>51</sup>Chitta Ranjan Nag, *Mizo Polity and Political Modernisation*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1998, p.83



freedom than the girls. Girls who attended the school used to come with their smaller siblings carried on their back which denotes that the Mizo girls in the earlier society had no time for themselves alone however small they might still be. The teaching was of the simplest kind and mostly confined to the art of writing and reading.<sup>52</sup> The work of the school was taken by Rev. Edwin Rowlands, an experienced teacher in the Lushai Hills in December, 1898.<sup>53</sup>

The government opened a number of schools besides the missionary schools thus providing educational opportunity to the Mizo. The first batch of Mizo appeared for the Lower primary Exam on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1903 consisting of 27 students out of which 19 candidates came out successful. At the same time, informal education was carried on by the missionaries which can be seen by the fact that the number of literate persons as recorded in 1901 was 2,058 of which 2,005 were male and 53 were female.<sup>54</sup> The British government realised the importance of promoting education to the Mizo as they needed to employ the local people to run the administration of the area. Major Shakespeare, the first superintendent of the Mizo Hills suggested to appoint Rev. E.Rowlands, a Welsh missionary as Honorary Inspector of Schools which was agreed to by the government. Thus, the Christian missionaries greatly helped in the spreading of education in the Lushai Hills.

Under Sandy's competent care of the Girls, School in Aizawl had slowly grown and had gradually secured more acceptance among the Mizo though many still remained skeptical as to the value of educating girls. In 1920 three of her pupils secured a

---

<sup>52</sup>Lalrimawia, *British Policy and the Education of the Lushais upto 1947* in Sangkima (Ed) *A Modern History of Mizoram*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2004, p.95

<sup>53</sup>Ibid,p.95

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.85,(census of India,1901,Vol.IV,Part II,p.43)

modest triumph for the school when they passed the Middle English Examination, an achievement which enabled them to go on to further education in the Welsh Mission High School in Shillong in the Khasi Hills.<sup>55</sup> Incentives in the form of scholarships and financial help were also given by the government to students and institutions for the promotion of education. Eventhough the girl students were also awarded scholarships, in general, the boys had distinct advantages over the girls in educational opportunities. There was stagnation in the field of higher education in the Lushai Hills due to the absence of High School for a long period. The first high school in Mizoram was opened in 1944, forty years after the first batch of students passed their primary education.<sup>56</sup> Even so, the door for higher education was closed for many years to those who could not move out of their villages, not to mention college education.

Among the few educated Mizo females during the British period, mention may be made of Lalziki Sailo, the grand-daughter of a Mizo chief, was the first Mizo woman to obtain Master's Degree which was in 1952. She was brought up by the Baptist missionaries since the death of her mother when she was only 4 months old. When she became 12 years old, she was sent to Calcutta where she passed her matriculation, continued her graduation in Madras and post-graduation in Calcutta again. Later on, she was even sent to England, France, Germany and Switzerland by the missionaries.<sup>57</sup> In comparison with other girls of her own age, she was very lucky as the others had almost no opportunity to receive even elementary education. Inspite

---

<sup>55</sup> J. Meirion Llyod, *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills)*, Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, 1991, p.207

<sup>56</sup> Vumson, *Zo History*, Self Published, p.301

<sup>57</sup> C.R Nag, *Opcit*, p.86

of the fact that Mizo people have their alphabets and started receiving their education from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the literacy rate has been increasing greatly. The reason may be that what had been eagerly taken up by the Christian missionaries had been successfully continued by the government after India attained independence. As a result the literacy percentage had greatly increased after every passing year. The literacy percentage of the Mizo during the time of the advent of the British in 1901 was only 0.93, not even one out of a hundred persons. But it had risen up to 91.33 in 2011 making the state of Mizoram in the top three literate states of India even till the present day which can be shown in the table below:

Table 2.1: Literacy percentage of Mizoram from 1901-2011

Census year	Persons%	Male	Female
1901	0.93	n.a	n.a
1911	3.98	n.a	n.a
1921	6.28	n.a	n.a
1931	10.7	n.a	n.a
1941	19.5	n.a	n.a
1951	31.6	46.8	16.9
1961	42.7	49.5	36.0
1971	53.8	60.5	46.7
1981	59.9	64.5	54.9
1991	82.3	85.6	78.6
2001	88.8	90.7	86.7
2011	91.33	93.35	89.27

Data taken from Mizoram Statistics, 2014 (by Lalchhuanawma Hrahse)

There are two remarkable features regarding the literacy percentage of Mizoram, firstly, the literacy gap between male and female is very less, secondly, the literacy

gap between urban and rural areas is also not high unlike the other parts of the country which shows that development is more or less equal in each and every part of the state.

Table-2.2 : Literacy rate of urban and rural population

year	Rural literacy %	Urban literacy %	Gap
1961	42.8	66.1	23.3
1971	51.4	72.5	21.1
1991	72.5	93.5	21.0
2001	81.3	96.1	14.8
2011	84.1	97.6	13.5

Mizoram statistics, 2014 (by Lalchhuanawma Hrahssel)

As per the above tables, along with the increase in the literacy rate, the gap between the rural and urban areas has been decreasing considerably with every passing decade.

Table-2.3: Literacy Rate in India

Census year	Persons %	Male	Female
1951	18.33	27.16	8.86
1961	28.30	40.40	15.35
1971	34.45	45.96	21.97
1981	43.57	56.38	29.76
1991	52.21	64.13	39.29
2001	64.83	75.26	63.67
2011	74.04	82.14	65.46

Source : Census 2011

WOMEN AND ECONOMY: Since time immemorial, the women folk had been equal partners in the economic activities of Mizo people. From the agricultural society to the present day, women have always played a dynamic and dominant role. Mizoram witnessed a rising trend in the number and percentage of female employees in Public Sector during the last three decades.<sup>58</sup> When an outsider lands in Aizawl town, the capital of Mizoram, the first thing which strikes him is the cheerful, confident faces of Mizo women. He finds them holding high positions in administrations, teaching, nursing and a large number of them are managing the commercial establishments.<sup>59</sup> Almost all the shops in the main markets of Aizawl as well as other towns are also managed by women. Gone are the days when there were only men who sells meat, now, the women not only manage the vegetable vendors but even run meatshops as butchers.

In the early Mizo society, the whole population depended on shifting cultivation wherein women played very important role in the various works involved in such type of cultivation. The women were exempted only from the cutting down or felling of the trees in order to clear the forest. After the felled trees are totally dried up in the sun, the men-folk burnt them and clear the forest for cultivation. Once the forest is cleared, the women along with the men took up hazardous job from sowing of the seeds, clearing of the shrubs that grow along with the vegetables and paddy a number of times in a year and during the harvesting time. For the jhum cultivation, the young Mizo girls and boys practise '*inlawm*' which means that they used to help each other

---

<sup>58</sup> Lalhmasai Chuaungo, *Women's contribution to socio-economic Development with particular reference to Mizoram*, Ed. Lalhnehzovi, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2009

<sup>59</sup> SHM Rizvi and Shibani Roy, *Mizo Tribes of North East India*, BR Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 2006, p.25

by taking turns in working in one another's field. During such occasions, it is the duty of the girl to carry all the tools of the boy like axe, dhao (chem), clothes and tiffins, usually wrapped rice, to and from the field in her basket. They also wash and repair torn working clothes of their partners in work. Right after coming back from the field, the girls had to prepare dinner, feed the domestic animals and even at night they continued with their handloom work while chatting with boys who come to court them at night. Thus, the women have very less time for leisure as they had to get up early the next morning to do household chores like fetching water, preparing food for the family and getting ready all the necessary items for the day's cultivation work. Hence, the womenfolk fetch the wood and water, cook the food and do the greatest part of the weeding and harvesting, they also make all the clothing for the whole household from cotton grown in the jhums, which they themselves gather, clean, spin and weave into strong cloth.<sup>60</sup> Mizo women play a very significant role till the present day. Many Mizo families today have women as their main bread earners or as big contributors in earning their livelihood.

According to the census of India (2011), workers have been classified into main workers and marginal workers. Main workers are those who are engaged in proper jobs and work fulltime, but marginal workers are those who take up part time jobs or do not have regular jobs as such. The census of India used to include the statistics of the number of main workers and marginal workers which can be seen in the table below.

---

<sup>60</sup> Lt.Col.J.Shakespeare, *The Lushei Kuki clan*, Allied Publishers Pvt.Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2008, p.16

Table-2.4: CENSUS WISE NUMBER OF WORKERS IN MIZORAM

Year	Main workers	Marginal workers	Total workers	Work participation rate
1971	1,51,619		1,51,619	45.61
1981	2,06,064	18,303	2,24,367	45.44
1991	2,90,317	47,028	3,37,345	48.91
2001	3,62,450	1,04,709	4,67,159	52.41
2011	4,15,030	71,675	4,86,705	44.4

Source : Directorate of Census Operations, Mizoram

There is very little difference in the work force among the main workers between men and women in Mizoram, but at the same time, the female workers are more or less fewer in number both in the urban and rural areas. In the case of marginal workers, there are more women in comparison to men which apply to both urban and rural areas. This signifies that Mizo women are hard-workers and that they try their best in contributing for the family income.

Table-2.5 : NUMBER OF WORKERS – 2001 CENSUS

Category	Male	Female	Total
Main workers	225428	137022	362450
Marginal workers	37580	67129	104709
Total workers	263008	204151	467159
Work participation rate	57.29	47.53	52.41

Source : Mizoram Statistics, 2014 (by Lalchhuanawma Hrahse)

The work force in Mizoram as given above in Table - 2.5 shows that eventhough there is a ten percent difference between the male and female workers, it can be still stated that women contribute a great portion in the economy of Mizoram. However, the workforce of women has declined in the 2011 census which has gone down by 11.3 %, which is a serious point which needs to be considered and examined.

Table-2.6 : NUMBER OF WORKERS – 2011 CENSUS

Category	Male	Female	Total
Main workers	2,63,305	1,51,725	4,15,030
Marginal workers	27,435	44,240	71,675
Total workers	2,90,740	1,95,965	4,86,705
Work participation rate	52.4	36.2	44.36

Source : Mizoram Statistics, 2014 (by Lalchhuanawma Hrahse)

Looking at the State Government employees, it can be seen that there was a great increase in employment under the State Government especially among the females as shown in the following table. From 17.1 in 1983, the percentage of women government employees have risen to 30.96 in 2014, which is a giant step for women. They have contributed greatly for the state and the government.



Table-2.7: Number of State Government Employees

Year	Male	Female	Total	% of Women
1972	n.a	n.a	10,834	n.a
1983	17,058	3,536	20,594	17.1
1987	24,007	5,637	29,644	19.01
1998	37,002	9,672	46,674	20.7
2000	38,919	10,973	49,892	21.9
2002	39,564	11,157	50,721	21.9
2009	40,357	13,296	53,653	24.7
2012	41,400	14,065	55,465	25.3
2014	41,392	18,220	59,612	30.96

Source : Mizoram Statistics, 2014 (by Lalchhuanawma Hrahse)

Even so, the Mizo women do not have the right of ownership or inheritance either in their parent's home or in their in-law's home. They do not have right over their own earnings or their property. They have no authority over their own children as they are considered as belonging to their father in accordance with the Mizo customary Law (unrevised) since the Mizo family is traced only from the paternal side.

**WOMEN AND POLITY :** After the annexation of the Lushai Hills and the traditional chieftainship was taken over by the British colonial power in 1890, Mizoram was divided into two areas, North Lushai Hills District and South Lushai Hills District. But after a few years, the two districts were merged into one known as the Lushai Hills District in 1898. At the time of Indian independence, Mizoram, then known as Lushai Hills, was left by the British as the Mizo leaders themselves chose

to be a part of India. Like other hill areas of that time in North East, it was granted the status of an Autonomous District Council in accordance with the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution. It started functioning as the Lushai District Council with 24 members from the year 1952 as a part of Assam. The southern part of the Lushai Hills was given the status of regional Council and came to be known as Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in the following year. The name Lushai District Council was changed to Mizo District Council in 1954 under the first District Council formed by the Mizo Union party, the first political party in the Mizo Hills.

Insurgency broke out in the area on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1966, due to the assumption of ill-treatment of the Mizo people by the Assam government. The insurgency was caused by the Mizo National Front, previously a social organization formed to bring relief to the famine stricken poor Mizo people. It was converted into a political party on October, 1961. But later on, it turned out to be an insurgent group due to certain circumstances. The MNF demanded independence of the Mizo Hills from the Indian Union. The Mizo District was declared as a disturbed area and was handed over to the army. After functioning as a District Council for more than three terms, during the middle of fourth term, the Mizo Hills District Council was elevated to a status of a Union Territory in 1972 by the 27<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed in 1971 by the Union Parliament and came to be known as Mizoram. The State Legislature consisted of 33 members with 30 elected and 3 nominated seats headed by the Lt. Governor. Along with the granting of the status of Union Territory, the southern Regional Council was trifurcated into three Regional Councils namely, Pawi Regional Council, Lakher Regional Council and Chakma Regional Council. These three regional Councils were

later on elevated to the Autonomous District Councils which are functioning till date. The first government of the Union Territory was formed by the Mizo Union party which later on got merged itself into the Congress party after functioning for two years. The Congress party has been the first and the only national party to be able to form the government in Mizoram till today.

Mizoram was granted statehood and became a full-fledged state on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1986, as a result of the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Mizo National Front and the Government of India on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1986. Accordingly, the 53<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Indian Constitution was passed by the Indian Parliament which granted the statehood to Mizoram. The State of Mizoram was inaugurated on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1987 by Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. An interim coalition government consisting of the Congress party and the MNF party headed by Laldenga as the Chief Minister functioned for six months after which an election was conducted by the Election Commission on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1987. The first state government was formed by the MNF party under the chief ministership of Laldenga. Since then, there had been many elections held in the state, both for the Legislative Assembly as well as for the local governments functioning in the Mizoram. In all these elections, there are a number of political parties involved who had set up their candidates. But sadly, the number of women who took part in them were very few in number. So far, there have been only four elected women legislators and only two women nominated members in the state legislature during the period of Union Territory. Few women have started appearing after the implementation of reservation of seats for women in the local self-government.

CONCLUSION: Mizoram, the 23<sup>rd</sup> State of the Indian union, does not have a long written history but has been functioning peacefully since its creation as a state. Unlike many of the other states of India, especially from the north eastern region of the country, it is often known as the most peaceful state. It is situated in the southernmost corner in the north east India and is a hilly terrain with only a little more than ten lakhs population but on the other hand, has a high literacy rate.

The society is patriarchal in which the male heads the family and the female and children are under the authority of the male-head. So, in the Mizo family, the wife and the children are expected to follow the footsteps of the father even in the matter of faith and religion. At the same time, there is a system of division of labour in the society as the women are regarded as being weaker in respect to physical strength as a result of which they are expected to perform those works which are less exhaustive. But even so, the women's work are much more in comparison to the men and they never had any free time for themselves. The women till now have made great contributions in the economy and can be regarded as strong work-force along with the men which may be in the field of both governmental or non-governmental services.

With regard to the political realm, different elections that have been conducted revealed that there was absence of violence except for a short time during the period of insurgency. The study of whatever limited history available indicates that women had been excluded from polity. There were no women rulers who had direct access to the chiefship. Even those women who ruled among the people occupied their seats only because they were widows of the chiefs. In spite of the fact that the Mizo

women greatly contributed for the economy of the land, they were always disregarded as useless without any contribution by their husbands. The study indicates that even after the passage of many years, majority of women had not taken part in the administration through elections held in the state.

## Chapter III

### WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation is a process by which people take part in political activity with more or less clear choice or preference which clearly denotes that political participation was voluntary rather than coercive action of individuals. The main variables which are taken to denote participation factor are voting, contesting the various elections, membership of village/local councils, AMC, legislature or ministerial position. Social norms combined with limited educational and occupational opportunities prevented most women from obtaining the skills and resources necessary to compete successfully for public office.<sup>1</sup> The present chapter analyses the participation of women in the various general elections held in the country so far, state Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha elections. It examines the performance of women candidates and the women voters in India as a whole and then comes to the state of Mizoram.

Political status of women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and in the value given by society to this role of women.<sup>2</sup> From ancient Greece to contemporary period of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women have been excluded from the sphere of participation on the basis of public and private dichotomy.<sup>3</sup> Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Hegel considered women as having roles only in the domestic activities so that

---

<sup>1</sup> M.Margaret Conway, Women and Political Participation, *Political Science and Politics*, vol.34, No.2, American Political Science Association, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.91

<sup>3</sup> Women Participation in Politics: A case study of Afghan Women, *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, Vol.4, No.3, 2014

majority of women were kept out of the public affairs. According to number of political philosophers, there is no place for women in political domain because of their significant role as mother and wife. That is why the public-private division remains as the main foundation of various practices in the democratic countries of the world. The struggle for women's suffrage is considered an international crusade drawing on the basis of universalistic principles.<sup>4</sup> Women issues became a worldwide phenomenon during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as women were kept out of the socio-political realm all over the world.<sup>5</sup> The twentieth century witnessed changes in the status of women in the different countries. Rights of women had been the serious concern of the world communities especially after the second world war. As a result, it has been mentioned several times in the Charter of United Nations. Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations clearly mentions as “ to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of the people”.<sup>6</sup> Henceforth, for the promotion of status of women in various fields and to eliminate discrimination against women, the United Nations has established two organs:

- 1) The Commission on the Status of Women and
- 2) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

---

<sup>4</sup> Women Participation in Politics: A case study of Afghan Women, *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, Vol.4, No.3, 2014

<sup>5</sup> R.Leitha Kumari, *Women in Politics: Political Participation and Governance*, Authors Press, Delhi, 2006, p.1

<sup>6</sup>[www.un.org](http://www.un.org) accessed on 30.08.2019

The General Assembly of the United Nations also decided on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1972, to observe 1975 as the International Women's Year. The General Assembly again decided on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1975, to observe the period from 1976 to 1985 as "United Nations Decade for Women : Equality, Development and Peace". Article I of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also starts with " all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

The General Assembly in its resolution of 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1946, on noting that several Member States had not granted equal political rights to women as was enjoyed by men, requested such countries to grant to women the same political rights as was the case with men in conformity with the purposes and aims of the Charter of the United Nations. The question of equal political rights of women became an international issue and the concern of the world. As a result, the General Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1952, adopted the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and opened for signature and ratification. It entered into force on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1954. This Convention contains certain political rights of women like

- 1) The right to vote
- 2) Eligibility for election
- 3) The right to hold public office.

Article 1 of the convention lays down that women should be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men without any discrimination. Article II of the Convention on Political Rights of Women provides that women should be eligible for all elections to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination. The Convention also mentioned that



women should be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women incorporates various suggestions relating to the equality of women in political participation and decision-making like promotion of women's political rights through many channels, including formal and informal educational, political, educational, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, media and business organisations.<sup>8</sup> It further pointed out that women should be motivated and encouraged and should help each other to exercise their right to vote and to be elected and to participate in the political process at all levels on equal terms with men. It also suggested that political parties and other organisations such as trade unions should make a deliberate effort to increase and improve the women's participation within their ranks.

#### GLOBAL CONTEXT :

Incidentally, New Zealand was the lone country which guaranteed franchise rights to women in 1893. It was soon followed by Australia in 1899, Finland in 1906, Scandinavian countries in 1915 and Soviet Russia in 1917. Among the western countries, the UK granted franchise rights to women partially in 1918 and fully in 1928 only while the United States granted to its women the right to stand for election long time back in 1788 but granted their right to vote as late as 1920, a very long period after it gained independence. Germany enfranchised its women in accordance with the Weimer Constitution of 1919. France, the country which had championed

---

<sup>7</sup>[www.un.org](http://www.un.org) accessed on 12/06/2018

<sup>8</sup> U.Chandra, *Human Rights*, Allahabad Law Agency Publications, Allahabad, 2013, p.264

the concept of liberty and equality, has granted right to vote to its women population only in 1944 after women waged relentless struggles for equal political rights. Among the Asian countries, Thailand and Myanmar were the amongst the first to grant women enfranchisement granted in 1932 and 1935 respectively. But by 1945, at the time of formation of the United Nations, nearly half of its 51 founding members had granted franchise rights to women. The newly emergent states which were formed as a result of decolonisation also granted franchise rights to their women as soon as they were constituted.<sup>9</sup> In Africa, women started exercising their right to vote only from the late 1950s, Somalia and Zimbabwe in 1956 and 1957, Nigeria and Tanzania in 1958 and 1959, Uganda and Zambia in 1962. The black women in South Africa were given their right to vote as late as 1994. At the same time, countries like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen still deny their women the right to vote, let alone their right to participate in other political activities. Although there are gross imbalances in formal political leadership between men and women, it would be a mistake to over-generalise about their nature, extent and even causes among different countries and cultures. In the Soviet Union, for instance, about three fourths of doctors are women but there is not one woman in the Communist Party's Politburo. Even within Scandinavia, there is a considerable cultural variation between the traditionalism of Norway and the relative political activism of Finnish women.<sup>10</sup> The United States Constitution by its 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment ratified in 1920, established women's suffrage at the national level but despite women's increased political involvement, they are much less likely than men to hold

---

<sup>9</sup> Sanjay Sharma, Dharam Vir and Kamlesh Mahajan Ed, *Women's Movements; Politics and Awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006

<sup>10</sup> Joyati Mitra, *Women and Society: Equality and Empowerment*, Kanishka Publishers Distributors, New Delhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1999, p.226

elected offices.<sup>11</sup> Women have been elected as governors and to the seats in the House and the Senate and a majority of the Americans declare that they would vote for a woman president if the right candidate comes along. Yet women running for any public office know their gender is as likely to turn off voters as it is to attract them. Polls show a minority of voters still don't think a woman, any woman, should be President.<sup>12</sup> The American media seems to be keen on the concept of gender at the expense of other qualifications. Christine Todd Whitman, Governor of New Jersey in 1993, answered a reporter who asked her what it's like to be a woman Governor, "I am a governor who happens to be a woman".<sup>13</sup>

In March 2015, only 14 governments around the world were led by women, with still lower representation in the local levels. In 2016, there was an increase in the number of women leaders with Theresa May becoming the second woman Prime Minister of United Kingdom, and with Estonia, Taiwan and Marshall Islands electing their first female presidents.<sup>14</sup> Some governments have initiated steps for the greater participation of women in public life, notably Cameroon, India, Mongolia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. In Cameroon, the "Mothers for Mayor" campaign has succeeded in doubling the number of women mayors from 400 to 800 and perhaps, the greatest upsurge towards women's participation is being witnessed in Africa.<sup>15</sup> In the United Kingdom, there are 208 women MPs in 2017 election which constitute only 32% of the total members, the Scottish Parliament has 35% women legislators,

---

<sup>11</sup> M.Margaret Conway, *Women and Political Participation*, Political Science and Politics, vol.34,No.2, American Political Science Association, 2001, p.231

<sup>12</sup> Maria Braden, *Women Politicians and the Media*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996, p.18

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> [www.weforum.org/agenda](http://www.weforum.org/agenda) accessed on 15.6.2018

<sup>15</sup> Amrita Das, *Beyond Beijing, Modernity Feminism and Women*, Abha Avasti and AK Srivastava (Eds.), Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2001, p.165

Welsh National Assembly has 42% women while Northern Ireland has 30% women in the Legislature. In the European Parliament, there are 41% women Members of European Parliament (MEP) in 2014.<sup>16</sup> The proportion of women in parliaments globally has more than doubled since 1995 but still stood at only 22.8% in 2016 and while Haiti, Micronesia, Qatar and Vanuatu have yet to elect any female legislator, just three countries have achieved gender parity in their national parliaments.<sup>17</sup>

World Classification by descending order of the percentage of women in the Lower or Single House as on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2018

Table 3.0 Women in Parliaments

Rank	Country	% in Lower House	% in Upper House
1	Rwanda	61.3%	38.5%
2	Cuba	53.2%	
3	Bolivia	53.1%	47.2%
4	Grenada	46.7%	15.4%
5	Namibia	46.2%	24.4%
6	Nicaragua	45.7%	
7	Costa Rica	45.6%	
8	Sweden	43.6%	
9	Mexico	42.6%	36.7%
10	South Africa	42.5%	35.2%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union

<sup>16</sup> [www.theguardian.com/public-leaders](http://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders) accessed on 15.6.2018

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017> accessed on 15/6/2018

Looking at the G 20 summit held in Hamburg, Germany on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2017, there were 36 leaders from developed countries of the world out of which only four women were present namely, Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the host country Germany, Theresa May, the British Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, the Prime Minister of Norway and Christine Lagarde, the head of the International Monetary Fund. All the other heads of countries were male leaders which immediately reflects the meagre representation of women in global politics.<sup>18</sup>

A two-day global summit was held on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017, which was attended by 300 female politicians from more than 30 countries in Reykjavik, Iceland, run by Women Political Leaders Global Forum (WPL), an independent organisation that aims to increase both the number and influence of women in political leadership positions, in collaboration with the Council of Women World Leaders, a network for female Prime Ministers and Presidents, set up 20 years ago by Vigdis Finnbogadottir, the former President of Iceland and chaired by Dalia Grybauskaite, the President of Lithuania. The WPL is an independent, international, post-partisan and not-for-profit foundation based in Reykjavik, Iceland which is the world champion of gender equality. Silvana Koch-Mehrin is the Founder and President of the WPL Foundation. Different communities function under the umbrella of WPL such as Women in Parliaments (WIP), Women European Leaders (WEL), Women Government Leaders (WGL) and Women Mayors International (WMI). WPL members are women in political office- Ministers, Members of Parliaments and Mayors. The WPL strives in all its activities to demonstrate the

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2017/nov/29/female-political-leaders-women-change> accessed on 12/6/2018

impact of more women in political leadership for the betterment of the world. At the WPL, optimising the power of communication and connection builds new communities of knowledge for women political leaders everywhere. The WPL believes that progress happened by convening women political leaders who have the drive and the influence to create positive change.<sup>19</sup>

Mention may be made of great women politicians of different countries who have made changes in world politics.

1. Eleanor Roosevelt :<sup>20</sup> Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was the First Lady of the United States from 1933-1945 and an American political leader. She was a feminist and created a new role model for First Lady. She was an important leader in the formation of United Nations and also chaired the committee that drafted and approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She was the first Chairperson of UN Human Rights Commission. and was called by President Truman as the ‘First Lady of the World’ in honour of her great work to promote human rights all over the world.
2. Golda Meir:<sup>21</sup> Golda Meir was one of the founders of State of Israel and was one of the 24 persons who signed the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel on 14<sup>th</sup> May,1948. She became the fourth Prime Minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974 and was known as the ‘Iron Lady’ much before it was associated with Margaret Thatcher of Britain.

---

<sup>19</sup>[https:// www.womenpoliticalleaderss.org](https://www.womenpoliticalleaderss.org) accessed on 13/6/2018

<sup>20</sup> K.L. Chanchreek and M.K. Jain (Eds.), *Eminent Women Politicians*, Shree Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2007, p.68

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*,p.93

3. Angela Merkel :<sup>22</sup> Angela Dorothy Markel was the Chancellor of Germany. She became the chairwoman of Christian Democratic Party(CDU) and leads a coalition with its sister party, Christian Social Union(CSU) and the Social Democratic Party(SDP). In November 2005, she became the first woman, first East German and at age 51, the youngest person till date to hold the office of Chancellor of Germany. She was re-elected again in 2009, 2013 and by slim majority in September,2017 general elections.
4. Margaret Thatcher :<sup>23</sup> Margaret Hilda Thatcher was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979-1990. She was the first woman to become the Prime Minister. She started her political career in 1950 and was the youngest woman Conservative candidate in a safe Labour seat of Dartford. She then fought for a safe Conservative seat until she was selected in 1958 and easily won the seat of the House of Commons in 1959.

#### INDIAN CONTEXT:

Looking at India, women had been participating in politics since the time when it was under the rule of different kings and their kingdoms. There were times when the kingdoms were under the rule of different brave, clever and able queens due to some circumstances. In ancient India, women were given a position of respect by viewing them with mother's image, a symbol of life, strength and purity, possessing capacity for patience, sacrifice and suffering. There are evidences of women frequently participating in political activities.<sup>24</sup> They took part in the public meetings that used

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.7

<sup>23</sup> K.L.Chanchreek Opcit, p.160

<sup>24</sup> Bhawana Jharta, *Women and Politics in India*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, p.47

to be held in the state. The position of women started deteriorating in the later vedic period due to several changes introduced in the Hindu society like compulsory marriage, sati system, denial of religious right and inaccessibility of vedic education for women. Their position further deteriorated in the post-vedic period and became a condemned section in the Hindu society. However, there were instances where women held powers as demanded by situations like during the rule of Queen Prabhavati Gupta d/o of Chandragupta II over Vataka Kingdom on behalf of her minor son in 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Princess Vijayabhattacharika who acted as provincial governor under Vikramaditya of Chalukya dynasty in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century AD.<sup>25</sup>

All over the world, not only in India, it is found that women were often in the fore front during the ideological phases of political struggle but when the struggles bear fruits and in times of distribution of power, the women becomes invisible and are no longer remembered for their great contributions during the hard times which is unfair indeed. The irony of women's exclusion from formal politics is aptly conveyed by the situation of women in India before and after the ouster of the British.<sup>26</sup> In the decades before independence, women constituted ten percent of those jailed for anti-British activities.<sup>27</sup> In the decades since independence, however, women have never held more than eight percent of the seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Parliament.<sup>28</sup> This indicates that it was easier to get arrested for democracy than to get elected in the democratic institutions for the women of India.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1996, p.50

<sup>26</sup> Barbara Nelson and Najma Chowdhury (Eds.), *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.15

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p.15

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.15



The problem of equal status and equal participation can be understood in the context of a society for, in a traditional society like India, the participation of women in public life is not encouraging and women are keeping low profile as far as political life is concerned.<sup>29</sup> In the Indian society, primary role of women is till today considered as wife, mother, child bearer and child bearer and are expected to stay inside the four walls of the house. Women are always subdued in the public sphere especially in the realm of politics. Except for a very few women politicians, women had no chance of coming in to the limelight.

Empowerment of women is a must for the socio-economic progress of the community and bringing women into the mainstream of national development has to be a major concern of the government. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable governments and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. The power relations that prevented women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public.<sup>30</sup> Achieving the goal of equal participation of men and women in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women

---

<sup>29</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.92

<sup>30</sup> S Nagendra, Ambedkar and Shilaja Nagendra (Eds.), *Role of Women in Panchayati Raj*, ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2006, p.260

perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.<sup>31</sup>

Issues relating to women emancipation can be addressed in almost all fields and only through consistent organised political behaviour and action can they achieve their objectives in the social, cultural, religious and economic fields. Whether it is health, employment, education and training or demands for their basic rights, it is through their collective endeavour that they could achieve their particular objectives.<sup>32</sup> In India, the massive participation of women during the freedom struggle had resulted in the enhancement of their status. As a result, when the women demanded equal political rights as men, the Congress in its Calcutta Session acceded to their demands. At the same time, participation of women during the freedom struggle had created an increasing sense of awareness to organise and lead the cause of their liberation from oppression and subordination among the women themselves. Their close link with the national movement helped them acquire the right to political participation, franchise and other constitutional rights.<sup>33</sup> There developed a tacit acceptance of women occupying various positions, both in the political and professional spheres.<sup>34</sup> This led to the formation of a large number of social organisations for women in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from the feminist agenda, women in India also had a nationalist agenda and they joined the Indian National Congress committee, took part in all forms of civil disobedience and were

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Pradeep K Sharma, *Political Participation and Dalit Women*, in Kiran Saxena (Ed), Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000, p.44

<sup>33</sup> Susheela Kaushik, *Women and Political Participation*, in Niroj Sinha (Ed) *Women in Indian Politics*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000, p.57

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.p.57

prominent in the Communist party and revolutionary terrorist groups.<sup>35</sup> Even after independence, women have played an important role in political struggle and have fought along with men in some major agitations and movements against authority, for wages, against rising prices, for control over land, for judicial remedies for injustice against women. They have participated in dharnas, gheraoed officials, gone to jail, borne police beatings and shouldered the burdens of struggle. Women often played supportive role sheltering activists, nursing or as messengers in underground movements and even take leadership roles in times of crises.<sup>36</sup>

Looking at the history of women's franchise in India, there were two phases in the campaign for suffrage : the first one from 1917-1928 where the main issues were female enfranchisement and eligibility for entry into the legislature and the second phase from 1928-1937, in which the issues were liberalization of the terms of enfranchisement and enlarging female representation in the legislature. The first step for the attainment of women franchise was made by the Women's Indian Association founded in 1917 by three Irish women, Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins and Dorothy Jinarajadasa. They submitted a Memorandum signed by 23 women from different parts of the country which demanded for equal political rights of Indian women to Montague and Chelmsford. This Memorandum was also supported by the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League. Consequently, the Southborough Franchise Committee toured India in 1918 to study the situation and finally decided that Indian women were not yet ready for Universal Franchise. But, nevertheless, the

---

<sup>35</sup> Nivedita Menon(Ed.), *Gender and Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.8

<sup>36</sup> Nandita Shah and Nandita Gandhi, *Reserved Electoral seats for women (The case for and against in the context of Maharashtra)*, Dharam Vir and Kamlesh Mahajan (Eds.), *Women's Movements: Politics and Awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, p.16

Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Parliament agreed to remove the gender disqualification but left to Provincial legislatures to decide how and when it will be carried out. The British could not possibly have directly enfranchised Indian women in 1919 when it was only in 1938 that British women got the right to vote.<sup>37</sup>The Princely state of Travancore-Cochin was the first to give women their voting rights in 1920 followed by Bombay and Madras Presidency in 1921. They were then followed by the other states. However, franchise was still very limited including only those women possessing wifehood, property and education. Two other women's organisations were constituted in the 1920s, the National Council of Women in India in 1925 and the All Indian Women's Conference in 1927, which worked for the welfare of Indian women not only in the sphere of politics but also included their development socially and economically.

From the time limited franchise was granted in 1920s, women had participated in the political process as voters and candidates but only on a token basis. A dedicated social worker, Muthu Lakshmi Reddy, was the first woman nominated to the Madras legislative Council and became the deputy Chairperson of the Council. In 1926, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyia contested in the Madras Legislative Council election from Mangalore and became the first woman to contest in elections eventhough she failed to get elected. The Government of India Act 1935 extended the number of women franchise as a result of which as many as 42 women entered the legislatures of different provinces. Another remarkable achievement was when four women, Sarojini Naidu, Durgabai Deshmuk, Renuka Ray and Hansa Mehta were elected as members of the Drafting Committee to frame the Indian Constitution.

---

<sup>37</sup> Nivedita Menon (Ed), *Gender and Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.8

In India, women's right to equal political participation including their right to vote, was accepted very gracefully much earlier than most of the western countries.<sup>38</sup> The Indian Constitution has guaranteed equality in all aspects including gender equality. This has been included in the form of political equality, economic equality, legal equality and so on. Political equality has been instituted through adult franchise where both men and women have equal rights to participate in politics. For instance, various constitutional provisions are there to ensure equality of all before law, as observed below:

- Article 14 : It guarantees equality before law and equal protection of law within the territory of India.
- Article 15: It prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth.

According to article 15(3), State can make special provisions for the benefit women and children.

- Article 16 : Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matter relating to employment. No citizen can be denied employment on grounds of religion, race, cast, sex, decent, place of birth residence or any of them.
- Article 39 : Article 39(a) provides for an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens. Article 39 (b) has provisions for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 39 (c) has provisions for securing the health and strength of workers, men and women, and not to abuse the tender age of children.

---

<sup>38</sup> R Leitha Kumari, *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance*, Authorspress, Delhi, 2006, p.8

- Article 42 : It guarantees just and humane condition of work and maternity relief. Article 42 is in accordance with Article 23 and 25 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Article 325 and 326 : They guarantee political equality, equal right to participate in political activity and right to vote, respectively.

- Article 243 (D) : It provides for the political reservation to women in every panchayat elections. But at the same time, equal political status can never be realised by mere declaration and inclusion in the Constitution.<sup>39</sup>

Table 3.1 Percentage of voter turnout in Lok Sabha Elections

Election	Year	Male	Female	Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	1952			61.2
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1957			62.2
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1962	63.1	46.63	55.42
4 <sup>th</sup>	1967	66.73	55.48	61.33
5 <sup>th</sup>	1971	60.90	49.11	55.29
6 <sup>th</sup>	1977	65.63	54.91	60.49
7 <sup>th</sup>	1980	62.16	51.22	56.92
8 <sup>th</sup>	1984	68.18	58.60	63.56
9 <sup>th</sup>	1989	66.13	57.32	61.95
10 <sup>th</sup>	1991	61.58	51.35	56.93
11 <sup>th</sup>	1996	62.06	53.41	57.94

<sup>39</sup>[www.iitr.ac.in](http://www.iitr.ac.in) accessed on 30.08.2019

12 <sup>th</sup>	1998	65.72	57.88	61.97
13 <sup>th</sup>	1999	63.97	55.64	59.99
14 <sup>th</sup>	2004	61.66	53.30	57.65
15 <sup>th</sup>	2009	60.24	55.81	58.21
16 <sup>th</sup>	2014	67.09	65.63	66.40

Source : Election Commission of India<sup>40</sup>

From the above table, it can be clearly seen that despite many limitations and setbacks sanctioned against the women in India, the Indian women voters have considerably performed very well from the very beginning of Indian elections. The percentage of women voters have been increasing with each passing election year which is a significant improvement in the working of the Indian democracy as women constitute almost half of the Indian population.

The Indian society itself does not open the door for women to actively take part in politics due to its traditional patriarchal attitudes. Indian women are expected to keep low profile in public life and their political participation is not encouraged. The political parties had never tried to mobilise women as pressure groups in their own right or to represent their own interests. Most parties are reluctant to file women candidates as they consider women as liabilities, inexperienced and resourceless. Unless they get patronage or support by some party bosses or party bigwig or have the patronage of political families, they are usually kept out of electoral politics. Even when they are fielded by political parties, they are given difficult constituencies where the party has little or no chances of winning in that area. It is this apathy of

<sup>40</sup>[www.eci.nic.in](http://www.eci.nic.in) accessed on 28.02.2019

political parties to field women that one found many women standing in elections as independent candidates with very little success.

Table 3.2 Women contestants in the various Lok Sabha elections

Year	Male contestants	Female contestants	Total	% of female	Winning% of male	Winning% of female
1952	1831	43	1874	2.30	26.08	51.16
1957	1473	45	1518	3	31.7	60
1962	1915	70	1985	3.50	24	50
1967	2302	67	2369	2.80	21.3	44.8
1971	2698	86	2784	3	18.5	24.4
1977	2369	70	2439	2.8	22.1	27.1
1980	4478	142	4620	3	11.5	19.7
1984	5406	164	5574	2.9	9.2	25.6
1989	5962	198	6160	3.2	8.5	13.6
1991	8374	325	8699	3.7	5.9	12
1996	13353	599	13952	4.2	3.8	6.7
1998	4476	274	4750	5.7	11.2	15.7
1999	3976	278	4254	5.8	12.3	17.3
2004	5050	355	5405	6.5	9.8	12.6
2009	7614	556	8070	6.8	6.4	10.7
2014	7851	402	8251	4.8	4.8	15.2
2019	7325	724	8049	8.9	6.07	10.7

Source: Election Commission of India



Looking at Table 3.2, number of contestants in the Lok Sabha Elections of 1952, there were 1831 males and 43 female contestants where there was a great difference in the number of contestants. In 2014 Lok Sabha Elections, there were 7851 male candidates and 402 female candidates which still showed very high differences in numbers but study of these two elections revealed that the rate of increase of the women candidates was much higher, i.e. almost 10 folds while that of men is only about five folds. Moreover, success rate of women is much higher than men which came up to 15.2% in 2014, while that of men is only 4.8%. The rising number of women as voters as well as contestants can be well taken as an encouraging sign to pave the way for greater political participation of women. Greater number of women entering the election fray clearly shows encouraging signs for decision-making for a section that constituted half the population.<sup>41</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabhas had enlisted 45, 59 and 61 women MPs which constituted 8.29%, 10.87% and 11.2% respectively which, even if not satisfactory, is an encouraging sign of strengthening women power in the legislature. The 2014 Lok Sabha has the highest share of women members so far which shows great improvement from the past records. The percentage of women winning in the elections is higher than that of men which shows that eventhough political parties denied tickets to women presuming that they were incapable of winning elections, women are very capable candidates in capturing seats. The latest elections held in 2019 has the highest number of women contestants i.e 724 but the winning percentage is less than that of 2014.

---

<sup>41</sup> Bhanu Priya Rao, *Women MPs in Lok Sabha: How Have The Numbers Changed*, 2016 <https://factly.in>

Table 3.3 Women's Representation in Union Council of Ministers

Year	Total	Women	Percentage
1952	26	1	3.8
1957	38	2	5.0
1962	52	5	9.6
1967	51	5	9.8
1971	53	4	7.5
1977	44	2	4.5
1980	51	4	7.6
1984	56	2	3.6
1989	21	1	5.0
1991	62	7	11.3
1996	39	1	2.56
1998	42	3	7.14
2004	66	7	10.6
2009	79	10	12.65
2014	46	7	15.21
2019	56	6	10.71

Source : [www.jagranjosh.com](http://www.jagranjosh.com)

Women belonging to lower class and caste with little education have very less chance of success in politics while men belonging to similar class and castes background do not have any difficulty in entering politics. Most of the successful women politicians either belong to economically well off families or have families

with political background who already have great influence over one party or another. They are either somebody's wife, daughter, daughter-in-law or other close relation with an already established party leader except for a few women political leaders who have made their own paths through the ladders of the party.

Incidentally, four paths to power were outlined, that of institutional, cultural transfer, Proxy and dynastic succession. Jayalalitha, Mayawati and Uma Bharti have taken the institutional route, Rabri Devi represents the 'proxy' route to power. In India, particularly in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, popular filmstars have entered politics exploiting their mass popularity and cultural appeal, and have been successful as political leaders. Dynastic succession : successor take mantle of predecessor, dead male kin/husband, champions his cause, strives for justice.<sup>42</sup>

India ranks 148<sup>th</sup> globally in terms of representation of women in executive of the government and parliament according to a report published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women. According to the data published in the report, Women in Politics 2017 Map, there are 64 MPs out of 542 Lok Sabha members (11.8%) and 27 out of 245 members in Rajya Sabha (11%). In terms of

---

<sup>42</sup> Khalid Hussain Siddiqui, *Women Political Leadership in India: A Study of Principal Alternative Paths to Power*, Archana(Ed) opcit. p.359

ministers, India ranks 88 with only 5 cabinet ministers (18.5%), the Asian average being 11% led by Indonesia with 25.6%<sup>43</sup>.

In response to the request of United Nations' Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to submit the status of women among its member states, the Government of India had constituted the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) 1971. Report of the committee which was released in May, 1975, mentioning women's inferior position in economic, educational, religious and political fields acted as a great factor in bringing consciousness among the educated Indians and politicians. The CSWI has served as a powerful and effective instrument for the upliftment of status of Indian women in several dimensions.<sup>44</sup>

Looking at the North-East India, the North-Eastern States comprising of the states of Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the political status of women is more or less the same as in other parts of the country or may be regarded as much worse than the rest of the country. Various Assembly elections that had been held in the different states have shown that even though the voter turnout of women voters has been much higher than those of men voters, it was easily noticed that there have been only few women members in the Legislative Assembly of the eight Sister States. This is shown in Table No. 3.4 below

---

<sup>43</sup> [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com)

<sup>44</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat publications, Delhi, 1999, p.119

TABLE 3.4 Women in North East Indian States

Sl.No.	State	Year	No.of Elections	No. of women candidates	No. of Elected women
1	Tripura	1972-1988	4	28	7
		1993-2008	4	83	8
		2013-2018	2	39	8
2	Meghalaya	1972-1988	4	27	3
		1993-2008	4	57	7
		2013-2018	2	57	7
3	Arunachal Pradesh	1978-1984	3	9	3
		1990-1999	3	9	3
		2004-2014	3	24	4
4	Nagaland	1964-1977	4	2	0
		1982-1989	3	4	0
		1991-2003	3	4	0
		2008-2018	3	11	0
5	Sikkim	1979-1989	3	26	1
		1994-1999	2	15	2
		2004-2014	3	32	10
6	Manipur	1967-1980	4	11	0
		1984-2000	4	37	2
		2002-2017	4	45	6
7	Assam	1951-1967	4	16	4
		1972-1985	4	66	8
		1991-2006	4	220	34
		2011-2016	2	177	22

Source : Statistical Data of Election Commission of India

In all the eight sisters states of North East India, one can easily come to know that women had been marginalised politically especially in the decision-making level. In

Tripura, in all the Assembly elections that had been held in the state, out of the 140 candidates who contested in the elections (including those who contested more than once), only 23 women contestants were elected. In Meghalaya, 141 women had contested in the different Assembly elections of the state out of which only 17 women had been elected till date. In Arunachal Pradesh, in all the nine elections that have been held in the state, there were 32 women who contested in the elections but only ten were successful. In Nagaland, 13 elections have been held so far in which 21 women had contested but sadly no woman candidate had been successful. In the state of Sikkim, eight elections had been held and 73 women contested in these elections, amongst them, only 13 women came out successful. In the 12 Assembly elections that had been held in Manipur, 93 women stood in the elections but only eight women candidates had been elected. In Assam state Assembly elections which had taken place 14 times after the Indian independence, 479 women have contested amongst whom only 68 came out victorious.

Analysis of the number of elections along with the number of women candidates as well as the success rate of women clearly reveals that women were much marginalised in the field of politics. Another important trend that has been revealed in different state assembly elections, the percentage of women voter turnout has been higher in the past 3,4 elections in all the north-east states and which is more so in the state of Nagaland but sadly the state has never had even one MLA in its legislature. The other north eastern states are not much better off as they just have few women members now and then in their legislatures.

Mizoram, previously known as the Lushai Hills, was originally a self-governing land under the rule of a number of their native chiefs. Different chiefs, majority of them belonging to the Sailo clan, ruled over their own territories. They had functioned much like the Greek City-States, eventhough much primitive, as they were self-sufficient within their own land and had no contact with the outside world unless they waged wars with their neighbouring villages. After the annexation of the land by the British, they were administered under the British governance although the system of chiefship was still utilised by them to rule the Mizo people. Till the time of the Indian independence, the Mizo people had not experienced any trace of democratic system of government. Thus, it was only at the dawn of Independence that they started having a political party of their own, Mizo Union party, which became a very useful instrument in providing political education among the Mizo people when democracy started functioning in the land. In accordance with the recommendations of the Bardoloi committee set up by the Central government, the Lushai Hills along with few other hill areas of North East India, was set up with an Autonomous District Council for their governing themselves. This autonomous status lasted for twenty years as one of the districts of Assam during which four District Council elections were held. In almost all the elections except for the last one, it was the Mizo Union party which formed the Executive Council eventhough several political parties had been constituted including one national party i.e Congress I.

On the eve of India's independence, Mizoram was, like most of the north east states, economically very backward and not accessible from other parts of the country. The

British had adopted a policy of isolating Mizoram and few other hill areas of north eastern states which resulted in culminating to a feeling of separation and distinctness among the people from the rest of the country. The result of this feeling of separation got bursted out in the form of insurgency among the Mizo people which occurred in 1966.

What began as a social organisation during the course of sufferings of people due to the Mautam famine of 1959, later on became an uprising for the independence of Mizoram. The Mizo National famine Front which greatly relieved the people from their sufferings caused by the famine became an independence movement after the famine got over. The MNF declared independence for the Mizo Hills in the early hours of 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1966, by capturing important government offices and police outposts in different parts of the Mizo Hills at the same time. The Government of Assam officially declared the Mizo Hills as a Disturbed Area on the next day and handed over the situation to the army. Women's participation in agitational politics could be found in their participation in the MNF movement. They joined the MNF with the hope of attaining independence for the Mizo Hills while some others joined the movement to evade the various acts of atrocities committed by the Indian Army against the women. These female volunteers were divided into civil and military branch just like their male counterparts and performed all the necessary jobs that laid before them.

Majority of the young women volunteers trained themselves as the nurses so that they would be helpful in times of injuries met by the men during the various encounters that used to take pace with the Indian Army. Some of the women were



given the rank of corporal and sergeant because of the valuable service and sacrifice rendered by them. There also happened at times when the MNF personnel were protected by the young ladies of the different villages by giving information of the whereabouts of the Indian army. The women also fed the hungry men volunteers of the MNF by carrying tiffin for them to their hideouts in the jungle at the risks of their own lives. Many women were captured and imprisoned including the wives of the top MNF officials along with their children. Thus, the MNF women played their parts generously according to their own talents, they might not carry guns or have direct encounter with the army. But they cared and attended to injured men who got hurt during the various encounters, they boosted their spirits by accompanying them in the camps in the jungles, some even got married in the makeshift camps and built their families in the camps.<sup>45</sup>

Mizoram became a Union Territory on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1972 and functioned in this status for another fourteen years before it was finally elevated into a full state. During the period of functioning as a Union Territory, Mizoram had its own legislature with thirty-three members, thirty elected and three nominated. The first Assembly elections was held on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1972 and was contested by two national parties, Indian National Congress and Socialist Party and two regional parties, Mizo Union and Mizo Labour Party. There were four women contestants among the 155 candidates but were not able to win the seats. The Mizo Union came into power by capturing 21 seats and 35.60% of votes. The second assembly elections took place on 17<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1978 where five parties contested with only one woman contesting

---

<sup>45</sup> B Lalfakawmi, *Autonomy Movement in Mizoram: An analysis of the MNF Movement and the role of Mizo Women* in Jagdish K Patnaik et al(Eds.) *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in NorthEast India*, Balaji Publications, Meerut, 2018, p.101

among the 54 candidates. The Peoples Conference party came into power by bagging 22 seats and 37.47% of votes. The lone woman candidate from PC party also won in the election which makes the winning percentage of women candidate cent per cent. Meanwhile, dissension arose within the ruling Peoples Conference party which led to the dissolution of the ministry and Mizoram was placed under President's Rule. In the third Legislative Assembly elections held on 24<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> April 1979, there were 150 candidates from the six contesting parties including the independent candidates among whom three were women. Of the three women candidates, Thanmawii was re-elected for a second term by capturing 34.3% of the votes polled in her constituency. The last Assembly elections of the Union Territory was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1984, with six political parties in the election fray. There were 133 candidates consisting of one woman, Thansiami, who happened to win in the elections by capturing 37.69% of votes. The Assembly elections that were held during the Union Territory period shows that there was a very high percentage of women winning in the elections from the number of their candidatures in comparison with those of men.

In accordance with the Memorandum of Settlement, 1986, signed between the Mizo National Front and the Government of India, Mizoram became a full-fledged state on 20<sup>th</sup> February, 1987. The first Mizoram state Legislative Assembly elections was held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1987 with its number of elected members increasing to 40 with the absence of any nominated seats. There were in total 145 candidates including independent candidates and four women contestants and four political parties contested. One woman, Lalhlimpuii, contesting from MNF party ticket came out

victorious and captured 38.06 % of the votes. She was inducted as a Minister of State during the MNF government thus making her the first Mizo woman to become a minister. Due to defection among the MLAs, the MNF Ministry was dissolved and the newly formed state had to be put under the President's Rule for the second time. Fresh election was then held on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 1989, with 162 candidates contesting for the 40 elected seats including four women candidates. In this election, the Congress party won by capturing 34.85 % of votes and 23 seats. However, no woman got elected from any of the seven parties which contested in the elections.

For four consecutive Legislative Assembly elections, no woman came in the forefront or got elected eventhough there were women contestants every now and then. In the 2013 Assembly elections, there were six women contestants among whom four of them forfeited their deposits. A bye-election was held due to vacation of his seats by Lalthanhawla, the chief minister who was elected in two constituences, in which the lady contestant from the INC party, Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu was elected. Thus, there is a lady member of Legislature after thirty years of absence of women, who was inducted as a Minister of State on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017, as a result of reshuffling of the Council of Ministers. She was holding the portfolios of Cooperation department, Fisheries Department and Sericulture Department.

Questions were asked to the respondents to have an understanding as to why there is less women in the political arena of Mizoram which are shown as below:

Table 3.5 Reasons for low participation of women in politics

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Ignorance	20	25.64	28	29.1	7	35
b)Domestic duties	26	33.3	23	23.9	3	15
c)Economic constraints	1	1	3	3	-	-
d)Lack of Leadership	6	9.69	7	7.29	3	15
e)Male Dominance	25	32.05	41	40.1	7	35
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

From the Table 3.5 as given above, it can be seen that there was minimal presence of women in politics in Mizoram mainly due to the patriarchal system prevailing in the Mizo society where there is high degree of male domination in the society as a whole which is more so in the rural areas. Another factor which adversely affect political participation of women in Mizoram is their involvement in domestic duties and responsibilities which is also indirect effect of the patriarchal society prevailing in the State. This factor is found to have greater effect among the urban areas as collected from the respondents than in the rural areas.

Table 3.6 Women should participate with stronger voice in administration

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	69	88.46	78	76.4	10	50
b)No	8	10.2	18	17.6	10	50
c)NA	1	1.2	6	5.88	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Table -3.6 shows that presence of stronger voice of women is supported by women in both urban and rural areas of the state with great majority support. This indicates that the present position of women in administration was not satisfactory and needed to be improved. On the other hand, among male respondents, only half of them supported stronger presence of women while another half opposed to it which indicates that the Mizo men are not very much supportive of having women in power positions.

Table-3.6.1

Political parties give more opportunities for presence of women in legislature

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	69	88.46	80	78.43	11	55
b)No	8	10.2	17	16.66	9	45
NA	1	1.28	5	4.9	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

All major political parties in Mizoram declare that they believed in the equality of men and women and competed with one another in attracting the votes of women during the time of election but the nomination lists of the parties included the names of only a few women in the elections that had been held so far in the state. While political parties have been anxious to secure women volunteers and secretarial services, they have been hesitant to slate them as candidates. When slated, they are sacrificial lambs with little chance of winning and once elected, they face a hostile reception from party leaders in their chambers.<sup>46</sup> Most of the women candidates have contested the elections as independent candidates as they faced problems in getting party tickets. The major political parties in Mizoram including both the Regional and national parties, have fielded only one or two candidates and that only occasionally and not in all the elections.

Table - 3.6.2 Favour reservation of seats for women

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	71	91.02	88	86.2	17	85
b)No	5	6.41	9	8.82	3	15
c)NA	2	2.56	5	4.9	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

All the respondents, women from both urban and rural areas as well as the male respondents are in favour of reservation of seats for women in the legislature which denotes the necessity of seat reservation. But till date, reservation of seats have been

<sup>46</sup> Flemming, Janet A , *Political Women*, opcit, p.15

implemented only at the local self-government but has not been able to be passed for the state and union legislatures eventhough all the political parties claimed to be supporting it.

Table 3.6.3 Reservation enhance women’s participation

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	66	84.61	87	85.29	17	85
b)No	8	10.25	11	10.78	3	15
c)NA	2	2.56	4	3.92	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Regarding the question as to whether the implementation of reservation of seats enhance the political participation of women, the respondents from both the urban and rural areas and the male respondents as well agreed to it, i.e 81.6% from urban, 85.29% from rural and 85% of the men. This shows that reservation of seats for women in the local government truly increases the number of women who takes part in the politics of the state.

So far as educational qualifications are concerned, most of the women members in the state legislature received education and some of them were even post graduate degree holders. Women enter into the legislative arena mainly through participation in the local government or in the party organisation, while others achieve political positions by belonging to families with political background.

Rate of political participation of women is very high in Mizoram as far as percentage of women voter turnout is concerned, which is a very remarkable feature but at the same time, there has been no woman Member of Parliament from the state. Since the time Mizoram became a Union Territory from 1972, it has been having one member each in the two houses of the Parliament i.e Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, but even after more than four decades, just a single woman, Sanglianchhungi, an independent candidate, has contested, not to mention elected, in the General Elections held in the country. Looking at the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, eventhough it has functioned for almost fifty years since the area was granted the Union Territory, there has been only four elected women legislators so far. Few women had also become members of the Legislature from nominated seats.

The Mizo women politicians who have stood in various state Assembly elections in the past several years have expressed that the Mizo people, in general, were not in favour of women standing in the elections and they were usually not supported by them. Moreover, they faced more hardships from their fellow party-men whenever they were given party tickets to stand in the elections. In an interview conducted by The Frontier Despatch magazine, among three of the four women who have been elected and are still alive, all of them agree that they had been elected only because of the influence of their party during the different eras. K.Thansiami admitted that she had been elected in the 1984 Assembly elections only because of the party's great influence over the Mizo people during that time. She also said that the toughest



part in standing for the elections was during the time of allotment of party tickets as there were many prominent partymen who aspired for seats in the elections.<sup>47</sup>

Lalhlimpuii,<sup>48</sup> who was the first woman minister in the state, admits that she was elected in the Assembly elections of 1987 mainly because the Mizo people at that time wanted the MNF party to rule the state because of the peace that flourished after many years of disturbance in the area. She also says that at the time when she was given party ticket to stand in the election, there were many partymen, especially from the local area of the constituency where she was given the party ticket, were against a woman contesting in the election and that these dissenters were persuaded to accept her after enormous efforts from the party headquarters and her supporters from within the party.

Lalmalsawmi,<sup>49</sup> who was a former Aizawl Municipal Councillor, contested in the last Assembly elections from MNF ticket against a popular and three times elected Congress candidate, also admits that Mizo people did not accept women in the realm of politics and that she could not get support from her fellow partymen in the election campaigns for quite sometime. All the women candidates who had contested in the elections thus, experienced opposition from their own fellow partymen in addition to being attacked for being a woman from their political opponents. Thus, without party support, no women candidate could win elections as can be seen clearly from various elections held so far in the state. Though there are women's wings in each of the different political parties functioning in Mizoram, these women members did not

---

<sup>47</sup> *The Frontier Despatch*, Vol.3, Issue 19&20, p.14

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid* p.17

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid* p.16

play any active role most of the time except during the time of election campaigns. Very few women participate in the political activities like meetings and rallies.

Thus, women constitute only very few percent of the contestants till today and only those who belong to well known parties like the People's Conference, the Mizo National Front or the Congress Party have chances to win in the elections as can be observed from the past elections in the state. Majority of the women candidates have contested in the elections as independent candidates as they stood no chances to be filed as major parties' candidates. Moreover, these women who stood as independent candidates and had no chance of winning in the elections as they had to fight on their own without any backup from the major parties and consequently resulted in the forfeit of their security deposits.

Women's lives, and particularly rural women's lives, are dominated and controlled by a hierarchy of collectives like family, the kinship system, caste, class, religion, the village and community. All these institutions, and the values they seek to promote, control women's behaviour in a way that makes the rights of individual women inoperative.<sup>50</sup> Like other parts of the country, the social and religious convention and lack of training and political awareness have limited women's political participation in Mizoram.

Voter turnout is a very important indicator of how citizens participate in the governance of their country. In most cases, higher voter turnout indicates the vitality of democracy while lower turnout shows the political apathy of citizens as well as

---

<sup>50</sup> Sampa Guha, *Political Participation of women in a changing Society*, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1996, p.27

mistrust of the political process. Voter turnout is calculated by taking the percentage of the votes cast in the elections from the total number of electors.

Table 3.7 LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS OF MIZORAM

Year	Number of contestants		Voter turnout %	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1972	151	4	76.14	69.84
1978	154	1	67.82	58.67
1979	147	3	68.17	68.51
1984	133	1	74.32	NA
1987	141	4	74.88	74.73
1989	158	4	81.82	80.77
1993	118	3	81.33	80.15
1998	211	10	76.42	76.22
2003	185	7	78.84	78.46
2008	197	9	78.77	81.24
2013	136	6	79.50	82.12
2018	191	18	78.91	81.09

Source : Election Commission of India

Table 3.8 LOK SABHA GENERAL ELECTIONS IN MIZORAM

Year	Number of contestants		Voter turnout %	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1977	3	1	56.4	43.7
1980	4	0	55.38	56.12
1989	4	0	60.37	56.08
1991	7	0	60.3	56.89
1996	4	0	72.9	73.9
1998	6	0	69.89	69.2
1999	7	0	67.52	63.08
2004	3	0	64.41	61.53
2009	4	0	53.44	48.5
2014	3	0	62.44	60.97
2019	4	1	61.95	

Source : Election Commission of India

The tables given above clearly show that the voting turnout of women is very satisfactory as a whole. The turnout of women has exceeded those of men in three Assembly Elections held in 1979, 2008 and 2013, which shows that women voters in Mizoram were very active participants in elections. In the Lok Sabha elections which have been held ten times in the state, the percentage of women voter turnout has not been much different than their male counterparts. Infact, they have better turnout twice in the elections of 1980 and 1996 which is hardly ever shown in other states of India.

Looking at the voter turnouts in different elections which had taken place in Mizoram, one comes to know that women have been performing very well as voters in their own areas but at the same time, it is easily noticeable that despite their excellent turnouts in the various elections, women contestants were very few in number, let alone elected. Most of the political parties are very much hesitant to allot party tickets to their women members. As a result, most of the women contestants had contested as independent candidates and it is most difficult to win without the party support. Moreover, in general, political parties have made little effort to place issues important to women on their agendas which may be due to fear of getting less support from the general voters.

In the southern part of the state, there are the three Autonomous District Councils functioning under the Sixth Schedule of Indian Constitution which are namely, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council. These three District Councils were created from the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council which functioned alongside the Mizo District Council and came into existence when Mizoram became a Union Territory. Several elections had been held in these District Councils where, in comparison with men, there are only very few women participating as contestants which is more or less similar to the state assembly elections as a whole.

**CONCLUSION :** The extent of political participation of women in the global context is not a matter of satisfaction as women have only very minimal presence in the international political arena. It is a well-known fact that women consisted of half of the world's population but at the same time they were not duly represented in the

decision-making bodies, be it in the local, national or international level. This also applies for the Indian state as a whole which is revealed more so in the north-eastern states where very few women participated in political process. Looking at the context of Mizoram, it can be easily realised that the Mizo women did not have much space in the political field inspite of the fact that the women occupied important place in the economic field as bread earners of the family. In all the 13 Assembly elections that have been held so far in the State, there have been 56 women who had contested in them including the number of multiple contestants. But only four Mizo women had been elected among whom only one woman candidate was elected twice. The election results clearly reveal the fact that women are not yet accepted by the general public as political leaders or as legislators.

## CHAPTER – IV

### ROLE OF CHURCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

The world today, which has modernized itself to such an extent that it had often been regarded to as a global village, where all happenings on one side of the universe can be viewed from the other side at the exact moment, is still effected by human beings and their various institutions which had existed from many centuries ago. One such institution which affects the working of the state is the church. There are some ways in which it has positive implications while in some other ways, it adversely affects the working of state. Role of the church and the civil society organisations and their positive and negative impact on the participation of Mizo women in politics is what the chapter tries to analyse.

The classical philosophers were engaged with the concept of reconciling individual's interest with the interest of society. Socrates was of the opinion that the conflicts between the individual interest and interest of the public be solved using the dialectic where arguers test propositions against the other propositions until they arrived at a reasoning which can no longer be refuted.<sup>1</sup> According to Plato, just like a just person in whom reason, aided by a strong spirit is able to constrain the demands of appetite, a just society consist of people who dedicate themselves to the common good and practice, civic virtues of wisdom, courage, moderation and justice and by performing occupations which are best suited for them and the ideal state is ruled by the

---

<sup>1</sup> Venugopal Menon and Chinnu Jolly Jerome, *Civil Society and State, Tattva-Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.9, No.2, 2017, p.34

philosopher king.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, on the other hand, opined that the best state was that which was under the rule of middle class people. But since this is likely impossible, democracy, which is a rule by the poor majority is better off than rule by the few rich. Democracy brings about liberty which provides opportunity of participation in governance to the people thus, bringing equality to all. Thus, philosophers of the classical period did not make any distinction between state and society and accept a good society as civil society which is inseparable from the state.

During the middle ages, with the growth of Christianity, St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas talked about reason and faith for an ideal state. St. Augustine supported the subordination of reason to faith to bring about the good of the people while Aquinas tried to reconcile faith and reason to bring justice to the people. Thomas Hobbes and John Locke talked of the 'state of nature' which existed originally among the people. The state of nature, according to Hobbes is 'poor, solitary, nasty and brutish' due to equality of all the people who strove for the limited and scarce resources. The people then came to realize civic virtues for the peaceful life of the people and the enjoyment of their individual rights. He further said that a powerful state is needed to be obeyed by all for a just society. Locke also spoke of a state of nature which is not as bad as that of Hobbes but also stress on the need to form a society which dwell on the value of civic virtues to be obeyed by all for the good of all, which further led to the development of a civil society. The power of the state should be limited so as to provide freedom for people in the opinion of Locke. Rousseau, on the other hand, argued that too much freedom given to people in a laissez faire state give rise to the

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



establishment of a wealthy dominant class who dominate the poor people. This dominant wealthy section tries to appease the common poor people by creating a new order called civil society promising liberty and equality for all, in order to avert civil war against them. The civil society, according to Rousseau is just a pretension and does not really serve the interest of the common people or take up civil virtues and hence, he advocated for a social contract under which the state will be supreme and the interest of the people, i.e. general will shall be served.

Immanuel Kant was the first to suggest the distinction between state and a functional civil society and advocated a public arena of rational, critical discourse concerning the ends posed by the state.<sup>3</sup> His main principle regarding the civil society was that people should treat other people as ends in themselves and not as means to the ends of others, which means that people should not consider others as means for their ends but rather consider how they can help others in achieving their ends. Hegel, too, envisioned civil society as a separate sphere from the state, one in which people were both workers as well consumers of other people's work. It is through a feeling of being equal to others that allows people the mutual respect needed to encourage successful public participation in political life. This manifested itself in the penchant for the citizenry to form groups and voluntary associations. Only as part of a group can individuals realize their self-interest which is best served by considering the needs of others as well.

Karl Marx felt that the private dimension of civil society overpowered the public aspect, which, in a market-oriented society, resulted in an over-emphasis on the

---

<sup>3</sup>[www.web.net](http://www.web.net) accessed on 11/4/2019

rights of individual to pursue self-interest and a corresponding de-emphasis on the rights of citizen to pursue communal interests. Domination of one class over another is inevitable under capitalism and would continue until a revolution occurred, instilling a classless society in which a true civil society would flourish.

John Rawls is one of the foremost political thinkers of this century. His main contribution to the concept of civil society is his theory of justice. To set a common standard viewpoint by which to judge the various means of allocating what Rawls calls *primary goods*, such as rights, powers, opportunities, income, wealth, and the bases for self-respect, he postulates a "veil of ignorance" that assumes that one's position and situation in life was not known. This makes it likely that decisions regarding distribution of primary goods would be made on the basis of providing a decent life for those in the worst possible situations, since the decision-makers may find that, upon lifting the veil, that is the position they themselves are in.

Thus, the term 'civil society' goes back to Aristotle's phrase 'koinonia politike' occurring in his 'Politics' which denotes a political community consisting of all eligible males or free men who constituted the political community or polis in the Greek city-states.<sup>4</sup> The household economy was sustained by the slaves, women, craftsmen and foreigners who had no political rights. Aristotle considers property important insofar as it guarantees the minimum of necessities to make the good life possible, though for him the acquisition of property is not to be confused with the good life itself.<sup>5</sup> In the Greek city states, the free men who are on equal footing

---

<sup>4</sup>[www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)

<sup>5</sup> Saha, Dipali , *Civil society and Modern Politics*, Global Vision Publishing House, Delhi, 2004, p.63

shared the same set of norms and ethos and lived under the rule of law and thus exist a form of civil society. A civil society is a group or organisation which works independently in the interest of citizens and doesn't come up under the purview of government or for-profit sectors. The World Bank has defined civil society as "The wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interest and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil society organisations, therefore, refer to a wide array of organizations like Community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, professional associations and foundations".<sup>6</sup> The civil society organisations carry out various roles such as protection of human rights against attacks and despotism by the government authorities, build peace in society, act as mediator between the state and its citizens on social issues, create public awareness.<sup>7</sup> A civil society is a public space between the state, the market and the ordinary household, in which people can debate and tackle action.<sup>8</sup> This implies that civil society includes all voluntary collective activity where people combine to achieve change on some particular issue. Civil society has political dimension to some extent but it does not include political parties. Hence, civil society can include charities, local self-help groups to international bodies like the United Nations, the Red Cross, Human rights bodies like Amnesty International, religious based pressure groups and other non-government bodies which work for the

---

<sup>6</sup>[www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com) accessed on 13/2/2019

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup>[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) accessed on 18/2/2019

welfare of the people which may be in the field of health, education or living standards in both developed and developing states.<sup>9</sup>

Globally the concept of civil society has evolved from a wide range of organised and organic groups of different forms, sizes and functions.<sup>10</sup> There have been significant changes over time in civil society landscape but in different periods of time, community-based organisations, workers or labour unions, professional associations and non-government organisations has been the most prominent.<sup>11</sup>

The future of women's political engagement in formal and in the politics of everyday life depends upon the gender construction of the family, civil society, the economy and official political institutions.<sup>12</sup> When formal institutions are impermeable to women's self-defined claims, civil society becomes the major arena for women's activism.<sup>13</sup> When civil society is weak or shaped by polarized gender ideologies, women have fewer opportunities to create the experiments whose successes help to transform the institutions in which they live.<sup>14</sup>

The Catholic Church played a very important role in opposing the military regime which had prohibited any forms of democratic system in Brazil during the 1970s and 80s. The church played an effective part in fighting against the poverty and misery faced by the Brazilians due to famine and poor economy. In its effort to help the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org) accessed on 18/2/2019

<sup>11</sup> [www.csis.org](http://www.csis.org) accessed on 18/2/2019

<sup>12</sup> Nelson, Barbara and Najma Chowdhury, *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.21

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

poor, the church had touched upon millions of women who lived in the periphery of cities or are landless peasants who were forced to abandon the countryside.

Religion, one can rightly say, is the most important, influential and outstanding feature of human life. Human beings are by nature, believers of some supernatural existence, which has control over the whole world. As such, man has subordinated himself under the control of this supernatural being. Thus, religion has always been an important factor in shaping the history of all human races in the world, be it the western or the eastern cultures. Mizo people are also no exception to this fact in the sense that they used to believe in the existence of a superior being which has total control over them and all their surroundings. They called this Superior Being '*Pathian*'<sup>15</sup> and used to offer sacrifices in order to receive his blessings. Along with this *Pathian*, they also believed in several other good spirits who can shower them with different kinds of blessings.

The Mizo also believed in the existence of evil spirits whom they called '*ramhuai*'<sup>16</sup> who were to be appeased so as to escape from their spells and controls. For pleasing the spirits, they used to make different kinds of sacrifices which were offered by priests appointed for the said purpose. There were two types of priests among the Mizo, one was '*sadawt*' and the other was '*bawlpu*'. Both of them occupied important positions in the village administration next to the chief's elders called *Upa*.<sup>17</sup> These two priests performed different functions, '*sadawt*' belonged to the chief and was responsible only with the rituals and ceremonies conducted by the

---

<sup>15</sup> A Mizo word for God who is the protector

<sup>16</sup> A Mizo word for Evil who can harm the people

<sup>17</sup> The Elders who constitute the Chief's council

chief himself while 'bawlpu' was the priest of the common people and functioned more as a physician or sage since he was mostly consulted in case of sickness amongst the villagers. One point that needs to be mentioned here is that there had never been any woman priest among the Mizo people. Mizo women had no place in the traditional worship of gods and goddesses and various spirits nor could they perform sacrificial rituals.<sup>18</sup> The position of Mizo women has been clearly reflected in the popular quote "Women and crabs have no religion" (*Hmeichhia leh chakai in sakhua an nei lo*)

#### Role of Church in Mizoram

In India as a whole, Christianity has benefited the country in great many ways. First of all, large sums of money were imported from foreign lands for various missionary works like supporting the Indian ministers, school teachers, clerks, missionaries, erecting buildings and providing temporary employment to thousands, schools, hospitals and other social institutions. The economic value of education provided by the mission schools, health and medicines provided by mission hospitals is invaluable, which included within its fold everybody, men and women, upper castes and lower castes. Secondly, it provided group solidarity and homogeneity among the people. Thirdly, improvement through health service is founded as a result of pastors, catechists, evangelists, school teachers, superintendents, district missionaries and Bible women serving as unofficial agents for government hospitals and dispensaries by paying attention to illness of their flocks, visiting the sick, giving them medicines and persuading them to go to hospitals or to call doctors.

---

<sup>18</sup> Sindhu Phadke, *Women's status in North-Eastern India*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 2008, p.329

The first Christian missionary who visited Mizoram, Lushai Hills as it was named during that time, was Rev. William Williams, a young Presbyterian missionary, working in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in 1891.<sup>19</sup> As a result of his short visit of about a month, the Welsh Presbyterian Mission adopted the Lushai Hills as its area of operation as requested by Rev. William Williams. Two independent missionaries, JH Lorrain and FW Savidge entered the Lushai Hills from the north and arrived at Aizawl in 1893.<sup>20</sup> After the duo went back, the Welsh Presbyterian Mission deputed Rev. DE Jones to the Lushai Hills in 1897 accompanied by a Khasi evangelist, Rai Bahadur and they were joined later on by Rev. Edwin Rowlands in the same year. The first Christian converts were two young Lushai boys, Khuma and Khara, baptized in June, 1899. In 1903, JH Lorrain and FW Savidge returned to the Lushai Hills entering from the southern part and arrived at Lunglei continuing straight away with the work of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission. There were already 314 Christians by 1905.<sup>21</sup> The missionary work among the Lakhers was started by R.A Lorrain, brother of J.H Lorrain and arrived with his wife in 1905 passing through Demagiri and Lunglei. A young Lakher boy named Thytu was the first convert among the Lakhers on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1910. R.A Lorrain started a primary school and a dispensary as a part of his mission work. For many years, three denominations functioning in Mizoram were the Welsh Presbyterian Mission with its Headquarters in Aizawl, the London Baptist Mission with its Headquarters in Lunglei and the Lakher Pioneer Mission working in the Lakher area. With the passage of time, some more denominations established themselves in different parts of the state. The

---

<sup>19</sup> B Lalthangliana, India, *Burma leh Bangladesh-a Mizo Kohhrante*, Remkungi (publisher), Aizawl, 2007, p.7

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.17

<sup>21</sup> Animesh Ray, *Mizoram*, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, 1993, p.134

Salvation Army was started in Aizawl in 26<sup>th</sup> April 1917, by Kawlkhuma in Aizawl.<sup>22</sup> They run an orphanage, a blind school and two high schools. The Roman catholic Church which was established on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1925, got more strengthened in 1947 under Father Brianchi and are at present running several schools and a college. The Seventh Day Adventist Church was started in Aizawl by Lallianzuala Sailo in 1946 and was joined by Lowry and his family from USA. They started an English Medium school known as Helen Lowry School which became very popular and has been recently upgraded upto the college level. The United Penticostal Church was also established in Mizoram on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1949, besides several other local churches.

Spread of Christianity and spread of education in Mizoram went hand in hand since education system was started by the missionaries in the place. The Mizo people did not have any scripts of their own, so, the Christian missionaries construct the Mizo alphabets using Roman scripts. They wrote books for both general education and for Christian religion which were taught in schools.<sup>23</sup> The missionaries gave special attention to education of the young girls. The Mizo family, at first, did not support female education due to the fact that the girls would not be able to perform their domestic works as before and might become useless. On the other hand, the missionaries felt that educating the women will bring about the much-needed social reformation among the Mizo society according to the Christian culture. For this reason, girl's school was opened in Aizawl by Mrs.Jones in 1904, which was attended by the Mizo girls where besides reading and writing, family-oriented skills

---

<sup>22</sup> B Lalthangliana, opcit, p.184

<sup>23</sup> Animesh Ray, opcit.p.139



like knitting were imparted. Gradually more Girl's schools were opened and in Serkawn, Lunglei, a boarding school for girls was started in 1970.<sup>24</sup> As a result of hard work rendered by the Christian missionaries, the Mizo women received education right from the time of the establishment of educational institutions by the church under the missionaries. Literate women are better liberated and more free from the influence of superstition or superstitious belief.<sup>25</sup> So it may be said that literacy had impacted Mizo women in various positive dimensions and high literacy rate among Mizo women enable them to make choices in areas like education, employment and health enhancing access to legal literacy and equal participation in the development process.<sup>26</sup>

In Mizoram, interesting development is involvement of more and more women entrepreneur in trade, business and commerce and they are doing well in terms of performance comparing to their male counterparts and education has played an important role in the entrepreneurship development.<sup>27</sup> This has led to the improvement of status of the Mizo women as they become more and more aware of their social status which further led to the formation of women's organisations. The first women's organisation, Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl, was formed in 1946 which has been working for the welfare of the women in Mizoram since its inception. Realising the importance of education, one of the most important objectives of the organisation was to promote education among the Mizo women.

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid,p.140

<sup>25</sup> Lalhriatpuii , *Economic Participation of Women in Mizoram*, Concept Publishing Company PVT LTD, New Delhi, 2010, p.115

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> RKP Singh, *Women Entrepreneurship in the WTO Era: A Mizoram Perspective*, in Baharul Islam Lasker (Ed), *Mizoram: The Emerging Issues in Development*, DVS Publishers, Guwahati, 2010, p.165

They had succeeded in persuading the first Mizo District Council to reserve one of the nominated seats for women as a result of which an educated lady, Lalziki Sailo, B.A, M.Ed, was appointed as member of the Council. Almost all the women legislators in Mizoram are so far, educated women with high educational qualifications.<sup>28</sup> Looking at the educational qualifications of the women legislators, however few in number, still denotes that educated women are politically more active in comparison to uneducated women especially in the higher levels of political participation.

Christianity serves as an important uniting force in Mizoram. Church administration plays an important role in the life of every church member and church elders are elected from amongst the church members. The church elders are elected not on the basis of social status of a person but on the individual devotional and spiritual aptitudes. They are responsible to teach and guide the members on the subject of moral ethics. The church elders occupy an important position on occasions of joy and sorrow in the society. The responsibility of the church elders demands a very high degree of sacrifice and voluntary work.

The church's mission is religious and not political, economic or social. But at the same time the religious mission is not limited to spreading the gospel alone, it includes the improvement of the people including political activity for the

---

<sup>28</sup> Mizo District Council Period (1952-1972),

a) Lalziki Sailo, B.A, M.Ed                      b) Maria Hmingliani, under Matriculate,

Union Territory Period (1972-1986)

a) Saptawni, B.A, B.T    b) Thanmawii B,A Hons(Eng)    c) Thansiami B.A                      d) Rokungi (NA)

Post Statehood till present

a) Lalhlimpuii M.A (Geog)    b) Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu M.A (political Science)

establishment of government according to the law of God.<sup>29</sup> Involvement of the Church in the political development of Mizoram was as early as in 1952, during the formation of District Council, where it played an important role in the electoral process.<sup>30</sup> Church gives Mizo citizens guide to elect responsible leaders by issuing pamphlets on the eve of elections encouraging people to cast their votes and utilise their franchise responsibly.<sup>31</sup> The Church leaders issue appeals urging the politicians, candidates and the members of the church for a clean, free and fair election.<sup>32</sup> Along with the other civil societies, the Church has been playing active role in the various electoral process in the state.

#### ROLE PLAYED BY WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Today women do play an important role in the Orthodox Church. They are the most active members among lay people of the church and are often the initiators and bearers of faith in our secularised global society.<sup>33</sup> Looking at the ordination of women in the various churches of the world, it can be seen that different churches have their own practices with regard to women. The Lutheran Church already has numerous ordained women priests performing the rituals and ceremonies of the church. The French Reformed Church has been having women Pastors since 1965 while the Church of Scotland have them from 1966. The Congregationalists Church had women-pastors way back in 1917 while Hongkong had their first ordained women bishop in 1944. The Anglican Church gave permission for ordination of

---

<sup>29</sup> R Lalbiakmawia, *The Genesis of Mizoram People forum*, Mizoram People Forum, Aizawl, 2016, p.168

<sup>30</sup> Lalbiakmawia Ngente, *Political Vision for Mizoram*, Mizoram People Forum, 2016, p.182

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.183

<sup>33</sup> Katrina Karkala Zorba, *The Ordination of Women From an Orthodox Perspective*, in Ian Jones (Ed) et al, *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches*, T&T Clark, London, 2008, p.59

women in 1975, Baptist and Methodist Church had also given this permission only few years back.<sup>34</sup> Ordination is an important determinant for considering the status and position of women since all decisions made in the church administration are done by ordained official members of the church. The ordained priest/pastors and the ordained church elders decide everything regarding the functioning of church in several meetings held at different levels of the church organisations with the exceptions of few representatives of church members in the lower level.

In different Churches in India, one finds different practices and opinions regarding the ordination of women. The Church of South India (CSI) is the first to ordain women in India, they have more than 1000 women pastors after more than 4 years of accepting it. The church of North India which was formed in 1970, had its first woman ordained in 1983 and they have a strong women's wing.<sup>35</sup> The Baptist church, in principle has equal opportunities for men and women and thus has a fairly good representation at the council and convention levels but not much in the local levels. In Catholic Church, women are completely excluded from major decision-making bodies of the church eventhough it has thousands of religious women and thus denied them of ordination. The Lutheran Church ordained women but did not involve them much in pastoral ministry. The Methodist Church practices ordination of women since 1956 and representation in the decision-making body and strong women's wing. The Orthodox Church has no role for women at all.

---

<sup>34</sup> R Vanhnuaitanga , Zalenna Thurin Leh Mizo Hmeichhiate, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 2007, p.66

<sup>35</sup> Nirmala Vasanthakumar, *Role and identity of Women in the Church*, Zubeno Kithan (Ed), *Women in Church and Society*, SCEPTRE, ESPACE, Kolkata, 2014

The Mizo women responded very positively to the foreign missionaries' efforts to introduce Christianity in Mizoram and they have been very active in promoting activities of Christian missions belonging to Presbyterian, Baptist and other denominations. They are engaged in collecting public contributions towards augmenting the facilities of churches, adding new services in mission hospitals, setting up rescue homes for destitute, all of which has enhanced their social status.<sup>36</sup>

In Mizoram, the biggest denomination is the Presbyterian Church in which women have been denied ordination right from the time of its establishment in Mizoram. It is a church which was established by the missionaries who came to Mizoram, Lushai Hills as was known at the time. Through the help rendered by the women missionaries from Wales, women in the church have been playing very active roles and contributed widely in various spheres of the church's accomplishments. Even so, women till today occupies only menial positions in the church's administration and their voices are heard only from the women's wing of church. No women have been given ordination as pastor or elder of the church which directly signifies that the representation of women was nearly nil in various church meetings, from the lowest to the highest level of meetings that used to be held annually for the whole of the state.

At the highest level of the Church administration, there is the Synod, which meets once a year in the month of December, the delegates to this meeting are the pastors and ministers, church elders from the different churches who represented their Presbytery and pastoral area, in all of which women are absent. The second level of

---

<sup>36</sup> Sindhu Phadke, opcit.

administration is the Presbytery which also meets once a year in the month of November. This body also consists of male delegates who are the ministers and church elders, all of whom are men, except for a few women who are representatives of the Women's Wing of the Church. In the third level, i.e the Parish or the Pastorate, annual meeting is held in the month of February where very few women representatives are sent by the churches. In the lowest level, the Local Church, the Church Committee consists of the Pastor and the church Elders without the presence of even a single woman. Thus, in all the administrative levels of the Presbyterian Church, women have no chance of taking part in decision-making which denotes the invisible role played by women in church administration.

Women are given some positions in the office and in the academic institutions like lectureship in the Aizawl Theological College, Principal's office in Synod Higher Secondary School, PC Girl's School but never for ordained positions to conduct church service or other such related works. In the highest level of meeting in the church's administration known as the Synod Meet, presence of women as representatives is almost nil, around 0.01 percent as all the other delegates consist of ordained ministers and elders of different churches.

The second largest church in Mizoram, that is the Baptist Church, is a bit more lenient towards women as they allowed for ordination of women since 1952. Since that time onwards, several women have been ordained as church elders but not as Ministers till 2012. In March 2012, Rev.Dr. RL Hnuni was ordained by the Baptist Church of Mizoram in the Assembly and she became the first and only ordained

woman in Mizoram till date.<sup>37</sup> Even so, in the different levels of administrative bodies, women are absent. The topmost level is the Assembly which is held annually does not have any woman delegates. The next lower level, i.e the Area Baptist Council also does not have any woman as committee member. The two lower levels like the Parish and the Local Church too, do not have any women in their committee which denotes the subjugation of women in the administration of the Baptist Church

The Catholic Church in Mizoram, eventhough it declared itself as most broadminded church functioning in the state, is still silent on giving ordination to women as priest. The Seventh Day Adventist has given ordination to women in other parts of the world but not in the case of Mizoram. At the same time, some women have been given offices of heads of departments and heads in their academic institutions. The United Penticostal Church and the Evangelical Church of Maraland have also not given ordination to their women members but decided in the Assembly held in 2002 to grant ordination to women as church elders. Lairam Isua Krista Kohhran, on the other hand, has given the right to ordination as church elders to women members. As a result, a few women have been ordained as elders in the church. The most generous church functioning in Mizoram may be The Salvation Army which has ordained a number of women as Army Officers. In case, the husband is an officer, they also appointed the wife straightaway in the same rank as that of their husband's.

All of the abovementioned churches, functioning in Mizoram have their own Women's Wing like KRIZYHPA NO PY for Evangelical Church of Maraland,

---

<sup>37</sup> Lalchawiliana Varte and K.Lalchuanawma (Eds.) *Religion and Women: Pilgrims in Search of Justice and Equity; A Festschrift in Honour of Prof.T.Vanlalhlani*, Lengghawn Press, Aizawl, 2018, p.244

Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl for Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran, the Baptist Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl for Baptist Church of Mizoram, the Ladies Auxilliary Department for United Penticostal Church, the Women's Organisations for the Salvation Army and the Presbyterian Kohhran Hmeichhia for Mizoram Presbyterian Church. All the women's organisations of the various churches work enormously for their own churches and contributed much through the funds which they raise from various sources like 'faith promise', *buhfaitham* (handful of rice), jumble sale (collecting old clothes and selling them) and other means.

Table-4.0 LOCAL CHURCHES AND TOTAL MEMBERS (as on 2018)

Sl. No	Denominations	No.of Local Church	Male	Female	Total
1	Mizoram Presbyterian Church	1114	295,500	309,014	604,514
2	Baptist Church of Mizoram	677	86,108	87,265	173,373
3	Salvation Army	237	30,601	30,464	61,065
4	UPC (Mizoram	536	31,902	31,497	63,399
5	Seventh Day Adventist	242	8,339	8,432	16,771
6	Evangelical Church of Maraland	92	21,862	22,645	44,507
7	Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran	113	14,407	14,461	28,868
8	Roman Catholic	26	11,555	11,755	23,310
	TOTAL	3037	500,274	515,533	1015807

Source : Statistical Handbook 2018 by Economic and Statistics Dept. GOM



From table - 4.0, it is observable that women members of the different churches outnumbered the male members in almost all the denominations. Only two denominations, UPC Mizoram and Salvation Army had lesser female members and that too, only by few hundreds. At the same time, one can understand that even though the women folks were in majority and make enormous contributions for the church, yet they are not given enough representations in the administrative functioning of the church. This has adversely affected the participation of women in the decision-making roles which further has a deep impact in other fields of life. Upliftment of the status of women in the society is not possible unless there is equal treatment of men and women in the Church. As long as there is inequality of roles played by women in church services, one cannot expect any positive change in the society.<sup>38</sup>

Table 4.1 Church plays an important role in determining political participation of women in Mizoram

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
Yes	30	36.73	43	42.15	6	30
No	40	55.1	45	44.1	14	70
NA	8	8.16	14	13.72	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017- August 2018

<sup>38</sup> Ibid,p.117

From the above given Table 4.1, among the respondents from the urban areas, only 36.3 % think that church played a role in the participation of women in politics while 55.1 % respondents think that church has no effect on the same. From the rural respondents, 42.15 % think that church affected the political participation of women in Mizoram while 44.1 answered negatively to the question. Among the male respondents, only 30 % of them think that church affected political participation of woman while the rest 70 % feel that there was no effect of church on the same. Overall one can say that church does not affect the rate of political participation of women in political participation of women.

Table 4.2 Church hinders/ encourages women to participate in political activity of the state in Mizoram

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
Hinders	30	38.46	36	35.2	6	30
Encourages	27	34.61	38	37.25	14	70
NA	21	26.92	28	27.45	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017- August 2018

When questioned about the role of church in hindering or encouraging women, 38.46% of the respondents from urban areas feel that the church was hindering women to be active in political field while only 35.2 % of those in the rural areas as well as 30% of the male respondents replied that the church did not hinder women to participate in politics. All of the personal interviews held among the prominent

women politicians resulted in the opinion that the church was hindering the political life of women in Mizoram.

Table 4.3 Social organisations in Mizo society help women to enter into politics

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	45	57.69	59	57.84	16	80
b)No	25	32.05	30	29.41	4	20
NA	8	10.25	13	12.74	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

When asked about the role of social organisations formed in the state, majority of the respondents including those from the urban and rural areas as well as the male respondents reply that the civil societies found in the state greatly contributed towards political activism of women in the state.

Civil society is a dense network of groups, communities, networks and ties that stand between the individual and the modern state.<sup>39</sup> To its advocates, achievement of civil societies is a necessary pre-condition for a successful functioning of democracy and the absence or decline of civil society is often indicated as the cause and effect of contemporary socio-political maladies. Civil society is gaining attention from scholars as it is one of the important sectors which contribute towards people-centered developmental issues and problems, which the state has either failed to

<sup>39</sup>[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

address or has not achieved much success in achieving them.<sup>40</sup> Though the onus lies on the state to solve people's problems and fulfill the people's needs, civil society through its constituents can play vital role.<sup>41</sup>

With the beginning of twentieth century, a number of organisations exclusively for women appeared among high-caste or elite women. In 1913, Saroj Nalini Dutt, an educated high-caste woman, founded Mahila Samitis in many towns and also established women's institutes in Bengal. In 1910, Sardadevi Choudhurani founded the Bharat Shree Mahamandal to assert women's independent identity. In 1917 the Women's India Association was founded in Madras by Annie Besant, an Irish theosophist and encouraged Indian women to join the Home Rule League and the Swadeshi movement. The National Council of women in India was founded in 1925 by Lady Aberdeen, Lady Tata and others. The All India Women's conference was founded in 1927 through the efforts of Margaret Cousins and others.<sup>42</sup> The Committee on the Status of Women was also constituted to investigate the condition of Indian women in September 1971.

The spaces for women to mobilise in civil society may be relatively restricted, such that they belong to a narrow range of organisations that they were gender typed, gender segregated or less politically influential. For example, poor women tend to be dominant as members of religious groups rather than trade unions, political parties and business associations, which have a more direct line into the policy process. The

---

<sup>40</sup> Laldinpuii Ralte , *Towards understanding Civil-Society-Government relationship: the Study of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Mizoram*, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol.22, Issue 7, Version.17, July 2017, p.24

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Kalpana Roy, *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999, p.7

problem is that the organisational forms in which women were mobilized was often not recognised in political systems. And where networks or associations formed by women become formalised, positions of authority may be taken over by men.<sup>43</sup> The importance of civil society groups in Mizoram is such that a sizeable number of the state's population are members of one group or another. For example, the Young Mizo Association (YMA) has forty-one percent of Mizoram's over seven lakh voters as members.<sup>44</sup> Mizoram civil society groups say that a majority of the issues in public life revolves around the church, and politics is no exception. What the church thinks will certainly influence almost every aspect of the Mizo society and that also involves elections.<sup>45</sup>

The Women Welfare Front which has been constituted by the women members of the village Councils across the state has been actively spearheading the campaign for the women candidates before the elections of 2013. Darhmingliani, the secretary of the Women Welfare Front said, “ we made all-out efforts so that we can see as many women candidates as possible in the November elections of 2013. We requested political parties to nominate as many women as possible. We made appeal to women voters to vote for the women contestants. As much as we need women in our domestic affairs, we need them in the legislative system too.” as quoted in Jagran Post editorials. A leader of the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the biggest and most influential women's organisation of the state, says, “ We are accepted when we take up men's work besides household chores, but the patriarchal-

---

<sup>43</sup>Kumari,R.Leitha , *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance*, Authors Press, Delhi, 2006, pp.196-197

<sup>44</sup>[www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com) accessed on 13/2/2019

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

mind people find it difficult to accept us as rulers or law-makers.”<sup>46</sup> A female councilor of the Aizawl municipal Corporation states that the administrative guidelines of the churches in Mizoram, especially the biggest one i.e the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, was responsible for the inferior status of women in the society which has a strong impact even in the political status of women. According to the administration of majority of the churches, no woman is allowed for ordination for church ministers and not even for church elders eventhough there is no written rules against eldership. Except for the women’s cell of the churches, not only as a whole but even in the youth organisation, females have very less chance of holding the key positions. This applies in the other non-government organizations like the Young Mizo Association, the Mizo Upa Pawl (organisation of the elderly), Mizo Zirlai Pawl (student organisation) and Mizo Students Union and others. She further opines, “ An ordinary Mizo male, without any education or such other leadership quality is always preferred over an educated and able female within the organisations ”. An important office bearer of an NGO, Young Women’s Christian Association, also opined that the church in Mizoram adversely affected the position of women not only in Mizo society, but also in various other spheres of life including politics. She further mentioned that had the church been more liberal, especially in terms of role played by women in church administration, things would have been much different for women.

---

<sup>46</sup> Post.jagran.com/mizoram on 24<sup>th</sup> October,2013

## YOUNG MIZO ASSOCIATION

The Young Mizo Association was formed by the name of 'Young Lushai Association' on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1935. The name was changed in October 1947 by replacing the word 'Lushai' with 'Mizo' to be more inclusive among the different tribes and thus came to be known as 'Young Mizo Association'.<sup>47</sup> It is a non-political voluntary organization which renders service to the needy. The aims of YMA are:

1. Useful occupation of leisure time,
2. All round development of Mizoram and
3. Promotion of good Christian life.

The organization takes important part in executing the government's policies and programmes especially from the grassroot level. The government sometimes entrusts the YMA for developmental work as it is a non-political organization. The YMA has a well-defined organizational structure in which there is the Central YMA at its headquarters in Aizawl. The CYMA controls all the lower bodies like the sub-headquarters, group YMA and different branches existing inside and outside the state. Since its inception, YMA has been playing an important role in the lives of the Mizo people in the economical, social and political aspects. Looking at the political aspect in particular, the formation of the first political party may be attributed as the influence of YMA. The Mizo educated youth who were members of the YMA began to aspire for a political organisation which led to the formation of the first political party in Mizoram. Within the organization of YMA, both Mizo men and women can become members by paying membership fee of Rs 2/- or Rs 500 for life membership. In all the different levels of the organization, women also took part as executive

---

<sup>47</sup>Laldinpuii Ralte, opcit. p.26

committee members or even as office bearers except in the topmost level. In the CYMA, even though women are sometimes nominated as executive members, usually they are only very few in number. No woman has been elected for the post of office bearers in the CYMA. A number of male executive members of the CYMA have entered into politics and have been elected as MLAs and MPs of the state but due to their absence, no woman member of CYMA has been elected.

#### MIZO ZIRLAI PAWL

Mizo Zirlai Pawl was formed for the first time in 1924 but it became defunct for a long time. It was revived again in 1935 and its headquarters was shifted from Aizawl to Shillong. The Mizo Zirlai Pawl has 12 Headquarters in places like Biate, Champhai, Behliangchhip (Tripura), Churachanpur (Manipur), Darlawn, Khawzawl, Kolasib, Lunglei, Mamit, Saitual, Serchhip and Zawlnuam with 50 Sub-Headquarters and 155 Branches. As to membership, every Mizo student, male or female is eligible to become a member with the payment of Rs 5/- per member. Female members also take active part in the MZP and have been holding various posts of office bearers of the organization but never for the posts of President or General Secretary. The MZP acts as an important platform for molding student leaders into politicians since a number of MZP leaders have joined politics and became main political leaders. At the same time, it is true that this applies only with the case of men because nowhere do we find female leaders of the MZP entering into politics afterwards.

#### MIZORAM UPA PAWL

This organization came into being as a result of casual meeting of civil pensioners in 1954. Since then, their members started increasing and formed an association known as 'Mizoram Civil Pensioners Association'. They formally met together on 4<sup>th</sup>



January,1957 by summoning all the senior citizens of the different localities in Aizawl and renamed themselves as 'Upa Lengkhawm Pawl' in which membership was opened to all persons above the age of 50 with a membership fee of Rs 10/-. Again in 1961, they decided to change the name into 'Zoram Upa Pawl' which was later on renamed as the 'Mizoram Upa Pawl' in 1992 and their motto is 'To be a blessing to others'. Main aim of the organization is to work for the welfare of aged people, helping the sick and needy members and to build a Nursing Home for the aged. Another aim of the organization is to fight against corruption which is an important concern for each and everyone living in the state. Other than the above, the organization does not have influence on the political participation of women as women-folks do not have much say in the organization itself.

#### MIZORAM PEOPLE FORUM

Mizoram People Forum (MPF) is an organisation formed jointly by the Churches and major NGOs in Mizoram to reform politics and the conduct of free and fair elections in the state in order to establish a transparent, accountable and reliable government. It was formed mainly as a particular event which took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> Mizoram Assembly Elections of 2003 which witnessed the use of force and abduction in eastern part of the state. From the very first elections of state assembly, the Churches in Mizoram have been engaging themselves for the establishment of good governance in the state by issuing appeals to the candidates and the church members for the conduct of free and fair elections in the state. They were later on joined by the biggest NGO in the state i.e Young Mizo Association from the year 1987 when Mizoram became a state. The vision and mission of the MPF is to

establish good governance, peace and harmony in the state for the progressive, just and sustainable socio-economic development and freedom of the people.

The constituent members of the MPF are as follows:

1. Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram (PCI)
2. Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM)
3. Roman Catholic
4. Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI)
5. Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (LIKBK)
6. Wesleyan Methodist
7. Central YMA
8. Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP)
9. Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)
10. Mara Thuttya P (MTP)
11. Young Lai Association (YLA)
12. Young Chakma Association (YCA)

As can be seen from above given members, the churches and the non-governmental organisations together constituted this body which has been formed for the purpose of establishing a good and responsible government for the state by conducting free and fair elections. Among the different constituent members, it may be mentioned that out of the twelve, there is only one women body from where women could have a platform to raise their voice while all the other members are male-dominated bodies in which all the important official posts are held by men. In order to bear fruits to their aims and objectives, the MPF has adopted different methods like

conducting Seminars and Consultations state level, district level or area wise where eminent resource persons give presentations, meetings with the Governors and Chief Ministers of the state, conducting talk show through electronic media, conducting trainers training and through preaching in the different constituent churches.

#### MIZO HMEICHHE TANGRUAL

A women's voluntary organisation by the name of Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual (Mizo Women Organisation) used to be the second largest organisation in Mizoram till the outbreak of the MNF uprising in 1966. This organisation was formed by the Mizo women of Aizawl town on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1946 at Mission veng, Aizawl with the full support of Mac Donald, the then superintendent of Lushai Hills.<sup>48</sup> It was formed with an aim to develop and improve the status of Mizo women in society and to promote health, cleanliness and basic education among the Mizo women. Office bearers of the first headquarters office were elected on the same day of establishment of the organization. The Headquarters of the organisation was situated in Aizawl town and different branches were established in different part of the town as well as in the whole of Mizoram within a short span of time. This women's organisation was the first organisation which has been set up for the welfare of women. The organisation had a clear set of aims and objectives to bring about betterment for women in various fields. The Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual was active politically since its inception had contributed greatly towards the political development of Mizo women. The organisation gained importance among the people in general and was given great

---

<sup>48</sup>Sangkima , *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Spectrum Publications, Delhi, 2004, p.196

recognition by the government which can be denoted by the following resolutions passed by them in the later years which are as follows .<sup>49</sup>

14<sup>th</sup> October 1946 : Women should be included in the Mizo Union and a separate seat should be given in the committee.

29<sup>th</sup> April 1947 : As soon as Mizoram has a government of its own, policy for the promotion and upliftment of Mizo women should be included in the government's policies.

23<sup>rd</sup> August 1947 : The organisation will be able to take up political matters whenever the need arises.

28<sup>th</sup> August 1947 : They started demanding for the reservation of seats for women in the District Council.

10<sup>th</sup> August 1948 : They asked for representation of women in the village council as soon as it was established and resolved to contest in the election.

The first General Assembly of Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual was held in Aizawl on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1947, whereby a number of delegates from the different branches attended the meeting. After the Indian independence, the Lushai Hills became an autonomous district known as the Lushai Hills District in 1952 with 26 members including two nominated seats. In the first District Council, Lalziki Sailo, (BA) was given a nominated seat and she became the first woman member of the District Council representing the Mizo women. In the second term of the District Council, the

---

<sup>49</sup> Liansangluri , *Contribution of Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual for Socio-economic Development of Mizoram*, Lalneihzovi and T.Vanlaltlani (Eds.), *Hmeichhiate Lamtluang*, All Mizoram Women Federation, Aizawl, 2013, pp.101,102

women's organisation demanded for two nominated seats reserved for women but this demand was not granted by the Council. Maria Hmingliani was the nominated member in the second term and became a lone woman member in that term which lasted for five full years from 1956-1961. During the second term, the District council passed an act known as " The Mizo Hills District Inheritance of Property Act 1956 " which was a great achievement of the Mizo Women Organisation. According to this Act, the Mizo women could have the right to inherit in the presence of a written will which was never practiced before. In the Mizo society, it had always given all forms of heirship and ownership to the male folks only.

The Women Organisation acquired land in Khatla, Aizawl through the help of SN Barkataki, the first Deputy Commissioner of Mizo District, He had allotted the land to them in response to their application for a plot of land. The organisation constructed an Assam type building with the help of grant given by the government which was utilised as a Maternity Centre, which greatly relieved the mizo women of their problems regarding maternity and childbirth. Another room of the building was also utilised as a training center for weaving called the Loin Loom Centre which benefited a number of women with weaving skill. Unfortunately, both the two centers were shutdown after the outbreak of political upheaval in Mizoram and the building was rented out. The rent which has been received is being utilised for the running of the Motherless Babies Home and the Working Girls Hostel. Due to the upsurge of political turmoil in Mizoram from the late 1960s, the Mizo common people suffered badly resulting in starvation and poverty, which resulted further into a few maternity deaths and high infant mortality rate. The Women Organistaion

decided to run a Motherless Babies Home due to the need of the time which became the first of its kind in Mizoram. A warden was appointed for the purpose who was trained in the Presbyterian Church Hospital in Durtlang and the Home started operating from 1969 with a baby named Thangsavunga from Samlukhai village.<sup>50</sup> The Home looks after babies until they attained the age of four years after which they return to their father and this Motherless Babies Home is functioning successfully till date serving and helping the needy babies in the state.

The Mizo Women Organisation also set up a Working Women Hostel from the grant they received from the Central Government as a positive result of their application submitted for such purpose. The Working Women Hostel was inaugurated in 1980 by the then Director of Education, Government of Mizoram. The Hostel is being run till today helping a number of women who need some place to stay while working for their livelihood.

#### MIZO HMEICHHE INSUIHKHAWM PAWL

After Mizoram became a Union Territory under the Indian Union, State Social Welfare Advisory Board was established as in other parts of the country. The Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (Mizo Women Federation) was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1974 in Aizawl under the guidance of Bonthanga Poonte, an officer in the State Social Welfare Advisory Board, with a sole purpose of social welfare works and mainly concerned itself with the welfare of mizo women and children. The original name of the organisation was Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl. But later on, the word Mizoram was replaced with 'Mizo' on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1998, so as to include

---

<sup>50</sup> C Lalkima, p.49

all the Mizo women, even those living outside Mizoram. The federation has its Headquarters at Treasury Square, Aizawl and also has branches in different parts of the state. The MHIP, at present, has 7 sub headquarters named according to the different districts of the state, 16 Blocks and 740 local branches. It is the second largest non-government organization.

The motto of the MHIP being 'Service to others' denotes its aim in helping others in need but, to be more precise, being a women's organisation, it renders service mainly to the women in Mizoram. It concerns itself with the upliftment of women's status in the state, protection of the rights of women and to render help to those women who needs protection from various acts of atrocities committed by others particularly rape cases. The MHIP declared 1997 as the 'year of women' and then continued to declare each year for the next five years till 2001 as the 'women's year'. There were great outcomes of the declaration of women's year like Women Commission was set up in Mizoram. The MHIP day has been declared as a government holiday. Political parties have included various women-related issues in their party manifestoes such as strengthening of Women Commission and Amendment of the Mizo Customary Law and inclusion of more women members in the Committee on Review of Mizo Customary Law.

The central government had declared 2001-2010 as 'Women's Empowerment Year' and the MHIP also tried its best to give political empowerment to women by requesting the leaders of different political parties functioning in Mizoram to give tickets to women in the state elections. The organisation also met the women wings of various political parties and requested them to allot seats in the Village Council

elections. As a result, fifty women were elected as members of the Village Council in the following elections, forty from Aizawl district, two from Mamit district, one from Champhai district and seven from Lunglei district.<sup>51</sup> Since then, the MHIP as a body has been trying to bring more and more women into political field so that women would be better represented in the decision-making level which will result in giving more importance to women's issues.

After years of advocacy and repeated attempts at sending memorandums and draft bills to the Assembly and other executive bodies, the MHIP finally managed to push the system to consider judicial and legislative changes in the marriage, divorce and inheritance and succession laws in order to safeguard the interest of ordinary women.<sup>52</sup> It was a historic victory for the MHIP that the State Law Commission reviewed The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Bill which was introduced and passed by the State Legislative Assembly on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

Traditionally, Mizo women have played productive roles within their homes as wives and mothers as well as outside the homes as entrepreneurs, teachers and officers in the state administration. But till today, Mizo women are absent almost all the time in the decision-making body i.e the Legislature. The MHIP has been demanding for a 33 percent reservation in the political institution which was finally passed by the Legislature in 2014 to be implemented at the local government bodies like the village councils, the local councils and the Aizawl Municipal Corporation. The MHIP Headquarters used to request its members to vote for women candidates wherever

---

<sup>51</sup> Minutes of MHIP 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 2003 p.35 cited in T.Vanlaltlani , *Mizo Hmeichhiate Kawngzawh*, Mizoram Publication Board, Aizawl, 2007, p.235

<sup>52</sup>[www.thebetterindia.com](http://www.thebetterindia.com) accessed on 26/2/2019



possible, irrespective of their party affiliations in the elections. Through the MHIP, Mizo women have indirectly participated in the politics of Mizoram and influenced the policies of the government towards the welfare of women.<sup>53</sup> The office bearers of MHIP being elected by its members for a fixed period of time, also provided political education to the females residing in their locality which is more so in rural villages. The elected leaders of the MHIP also occupy important positions in the administration of their own locality as they are always involved by the government in various developmental activities.

#### MIZORAM HMEITHAI ASSOCIATION

Mizoram Hmeithai Association was established on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1987 by a group of women friends in Aizawl. This association has a specific aims and objectives and has been of great help to the Mizo women in general and the Mizo widows in particular. Its main objective is to help women in distress and help them establish themselves. The word '*hmeithai*' means widows but in case of membership for this association, it has been extended not only to women whose husbands have died but also includes divorced women, unmarried mothers and spinsters above the age of forty years.

For many years later on, this association became almost defunct but was revived again in the beginning of the year 1995. New leaders were elected on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1995 and since then this particular day has been observed as *Widow's Day* in Mizoram. The person responsible for its revival was Veronica K.Zatluangi, who had been in government service for many years holding important posts under the

---

<sup>53</sup>Lalhualhimi, *Political Participation of Women in Mizoram: A Study of Aizawl Municipal Council and Local Councils*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation. p.22

Government of Mizoram. For the next few years, the association had to function with limited funds. But gradually it became more and more self-sufficient especially after it was registered as the Mizoram Women Cooperative Federation Ltd. under Cooperative Department. Having been registered as a cooperative society, the leaders of the association, specially Veronica K. Zatluangi went to Delhi and managed to secure loans for the body. It was later on recognised by the RGVN who sanctioned them loans to start up small business.

The MHA, from the very beginning, concerned itself with providing education for the poor and unprivileged children which they were able to do so from 1998 by establishing a school from Class -V upto Class -X from Government of India under the Residential School for Under-Privileged Children Scheme, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. They finally managed to acquire a school building of their own in the land donated by Veronica K. Zatluangi.

The MHA also renders help to orphan babies as well as helpless mothers by providing them food and place to stay with the help of funds received from the Department of Women and Child development under the Central government.

The MHA cares for widows and women in general, and also provide lawyers for those women who could not afford lawyers to stand for them before the court of law. In this way, they have helped more than forty women in solving their cases in their favour.

The MHA arranged mobile clinics for people living in remote areas where doctors are not available to the people and they have provided such type of clinics in almost

all part of the state. They have also once, arranged for the establishment of market successfully for ginger planters by contacting the Central Government which the state government itself failed to do so.

#### YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

This association was established in Aizawl in 1985 as a part of the worldwide organisation Young Women Christian Association and has been collaborating and working actively along with the branches in other parts of the world. It sends delegates in national and international level meetings of the organisation. The YWCA has been running a Women's Hostel in Mission Vengthlang since 1986 which is meant for providing a shelter to the working women as well as high school and college students from other parts of the state. This has served a very useful purpose for numerous Mizo women coming and settling in Aizawl, the capital city from different towns and villages.

Realising the importance of a healthy family life, the YWCA has also set up a Family Counselling Centre in one room of their office. The staffs have been hired to give counselling to people who seeks counselling and having different problems. At the same time, the counsellors also at times go to the house of such people due to their inability to meet them in the office.

The association also tries to uphold and protect Women's Rights and tries to create awareness among the Mizo women by organising workshops and seminars. It cares for the safety and protection of women and realising the frequent occurrence of rape, the organisation had even written in the newspaper, the 'Vanglaini' about what to do

on the occurrence of such type of incident, how to report to the police in order to catch the rapist. The YWCA also works for the welfare of poor and unfortunate children who needed support and care. The YWCA, being a Christian association for women, does not play much role in the political participation of women as such. But at the same time, having provided much for the welfare of women, it has been indirectly helping and moulding the Mizo women regarding their rights in various fields, which includes their political rights.

#### UNITED MIZO GRASSROOT WOMEN

This organisation can be understood in more simple way as ‘ the self-harvested vegetable vendors.’ It is of very recent origin which was established only in the year 2000 but at the same time, it is a very important organisation in the sense that Mizo people as a whole are dependent on their labour for our daily food. These women faced great hardships due to their lack of proper place for them to sell their vegetables which they had to bring in from various places of the state. This situation forced them to sell their vegetables at cheap rates to the permanent vendors in the city at a price not worthy of their hardwork. Otherwise, they had to seek for a place to sell them by staying up the whole previous Friday night to be able to sell their crops on Saturday which is the main day for shopping of vegetables in Mizoram. At present different branches have been set up in more than twenty villages and has a society registration recognised by the Government of Mizoram.

The UMGW is a very unique organisation in the sense that none of the leaders were educated or prominent persons. But persons who earned their living through hard labour and is, thus, not a popular body. But it is the very essence of life for all the

city dwellers. There is no doubt in saying that most of the vegetable vendors in Mizoram are women who took part in all activities from planting of seeds upto clearing of the fields for the growth of the vegetables and reaping them as well as selling of their harvested crops. Thus, Mizo women play very important role in the economy of the state.

#### EVANGELICAL NURSES FELLOWSHIP OF INDIA, MIZORAM

It was established in Mizoram on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 1975 by Thanpari Pautu with the aim of serving God through serving the people. It has its office in Aizawl with permanent office staff running the office. This organisation have dedicated members who are nurses working in different hospitals, student nurses and health workers. It has been a valuable help for the general public as a whole but does not have any role with regard to political activities of Mizo women.

#### ALL MIZORAM WOMEN FEDERATION

The All Mizoram Women Federation was formed by the office order No.SSWB.127(A)/2011-12/21 dated 9<sup>th</sup> November,2011 with a six member adhoc office bearers appointed for one year. The body was formed with a view to include all women living in different parts of the state as such an all -inclusive body was still absent in the state in spite of the presence of a number of women bodies.

There are several women's bodies which are affiliated to AMWF and these are:

1. Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan (PMSA)
2. Lai Women Associatin (LWA)
3. Mara Chano Py (MChP)

4. Chakma Mahila Samiti
5. Mizoram Mahila Sangathan
6. Gurkha Mahila Samiti
7. Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual
8. Society for Economic Upliftment

The AMWF along with the above mentioned affiliated bodies has been working earnestly for the welfare of women in Mizoram.

#### PANCHAYAT MAHILA SHAKTI ABHIYAN

The Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan (PMSA) Core Committee was constituted in pursuance of directions given from the Government of India's Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2008. The core Committee had 14 members with Lalneihzovi as the Chairperson. The function of the PMSA was to organize the elected Women Representatives and promoting political empowerment of women. The Core Committee sent a letter to the Minister of Local Administration Department demanding the reservation of 33 % of seats for women in the Village Councils. This yielded positive results when The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Amendment Act 2014 was passed by the Legislature and implemented in the same year. The PMSA also at the same time submitted the Resolutions of the Core Committee to the then Chief Minister, Lalthanhawla for the reservation of 33 % of seats for women in the Aizawl Municipal Council whose 2007 provisions did not contain reservation of seats for women. In response to the constant and sincere request of the PMSA Core Committee, the Government of Mizoram, in its Assembly Session on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009, amended the Mizoram Municipalities Act by making

33 % seats reservation for women.<sup>54</sup> The PMSA has since then been working for the empowerment of women in Mizoram and had made immense achievements in in the political scenario for women even if it is still only at the local government level.

A retired government servant from Laipuitlang in his interview with the researcher answers that the lack of women in Mizoram politics was an indirect influence of the Church. He stated that so long as women were denied platform to serve as ordained ministers and church elders to preach in the Church, the Mizo women would never have the opportunity to perform well in politics.<sup>55</sup> He further said that there are less women leaders in different civil societies functioning in the state except for the women organisations, due to the influence of Church.

A woman political leader from Champhai also stated in her interview with the researcher said that the Church in Mizoram is responsible for the minimal presence of women in the field of politics in the state. Because the Church has been giving inferior position to women members of the Church which is clearly shown by the fact that women had been denied ordination and position of authority and importance in the Church since their establishment in Mizoram. This resulted into the growth of inferiority complex among the Mizo women who developed a feeling that they were not capable enough to be the real administrators.<sup>56</sup>

**CONCLUSION :** Mizoram, with a large majority of its population being Christians, the Church has a great influence in the social, cultural, economic and even the

---

<sup>54</sup>T Vanlaltlani, *Contribution of Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan for political Empowerment of Women in Mizoram*, C.Lalkima and Lalneihzovi (Eds.), *Participation of Women in Politics and Governance-Local and State in Mizoram*, Indian Institute of Public Administration and Women's Studies Centre, Aizawl, 2018

<sup>55</sup> Interview held with the person on 23.3.2019

<sup>56</sup> Interview held on 21.3 2019

political lives of the people. With this great impact of the church upon the public, it can be easily observed that the political participation of women in the state had been indirectly and adversely affected by the church administration. The subordination of women in all different denominations of the churches has slowly built up a sense of inconfidence among the womenfolk specially in the political decision-making. This has been observed in different NGOs and other civil society bodies as well. Except for the women organisations, women are rarely found occupying the key positions of organisations. Even if they are the office bearers, they never occupy the post of president or vice-president, but other posts like finance secretary or treasurer. Moreover, other than the women's organisations, none of the other organisations work for the benefit of women in particular, but work for the society as a whole and mainly function under the dominance of male-folk, and thus contribute nothing much in involving women for various social and political activities.

At the same time, it is admitted that the Churches in Mizoram, especially the larger denominations did play important roles in imparting political education among the people in general. Looking at the Presbyterian Church, it has been performing a great role in political socialisation of its members which comprises of more women since a few years back. On the eve of state elections, it issues pamphlets which request its members to cast their votes and exercise their political rights and to vote for responsible persons to lead the government. Again as mentioned before, through the working of organisation known as the Mizo People Forum which is formed by different church denominations and the NGOs, both the two bodies play important roles in socialising as well as imparting knowledge to the general public in political



process. It has organised seminars, workshops, awareness campaigns for the general public and requested the political parties and their leaders to be true and fair in their activities. Another important organization formed by the different churches in Mizoram is Mizoram Kohhran Hruaitu Committee (MKHC) which is a joint platform of sixteen church denominations in Mizoram. This organization also plays an important role in the various walks of life of Mizo people especially in imparting political education to all the church members. Besides the many other activities, they used to send a common message to all the member churches to be delivered and read out to the church members attending the service. They make guidelines as to whom the members should give their vote, who are the rightful rulers for the Mizo people without addressing any individual candidate or a particular party. This message was sent to the general public had served as an important tool of imparting political knowledge as the level of political awareness is not the same in different place in the state.

## CHAPTER – V

### URBAN-RURAL DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Participation in politics is a pre-requisite and minimal requirement for successful democratic political system.<sup>1</sup> Participation is concerned with the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulate institutions in a given social situation on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control.<sup>2</sup> When citizens participate in politics, they can have some control over their political system and over the administrative set up by electing their representatives, communicating with them and influencing them in their decision-making and by seeking information.

Political participation is cumulative in nature which means that it might spread over various activities at the same time. A person may involve himself in one or more political actions at the same time like being a member of political party, interest group and may donate for some political activities and also contest elections to the legislature.<sup>3</sup> According to Milbrath, there are four major factors that affect political participation namely,

1. The extent to which the individual receives political stimuli
2. The individual's personal characteristics
3. Social characteristics
4. The political environment to which the individual finds himself

---

<sup>1</sup> R Leitha Kumari, *Women and Politics : Participation and Governance*, Authors Press, Delhi, 2006, p.55

<sup>2</sup> A Pearse and Steafel M, "*Inquiry in to Participation*" quoted in R Leitha Kumari opcit. 2006, p.55

<sup>3</sup> M Ramchander and K Lakshmi, *Women and Politics: A Study of Political Participation*, Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1993, p.216

He further divides the input political activity based on the intensity of participation into three categories like (i) active (ii) passive or supportive (iii) apathetic<sup>4</sup>.

Absence of women in the political arena has been recognised by various scholars and women organisations and the demand to include women in the political sphere has started and it has also been argued that the absence of women from political decision-making has resulted into the ignorance of women related issues and has helped in the continuation of violence against women.<sup>5</sup> Looking at the participatory nature of women in legislatures, among the few women who attained the higher political offices, majority of them consist of wives and daughters of the deceased heroes of masses. It is very rare that women had achieved the highest offices on their own. Be it Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Hasina or Bandaranaike, none rose to positions of power on their own. They were pushed there because of the charisma of their fathers or husbands who happened to be the national heroes. There are only a few women such as Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meir, Sarojini Naidu and Mamata Banerjee who rose from the ranks and created their own political space.<sup>6</sup>

An increasing number of countries are introducing various forms of quotas to reach gender equality in political representation to facilitate greater involvement of women in the political decision-making.<sup>7</sup> There are primarily three types of quotas : firstly, voluntary quotas by political parties which promise to nominate a certain percentage of female candidates, secondly, candidate quotas that reserve a certain number of

---

<sup>4</sup> L Milbrath, *Political Participation*, Rand, Macknell & Co. Chicago, 1965, p. 26

<sup>5</sup> Anuradha Rai, (2016), Women in Democracies: Quota System and Political Empowerment of Women in Changing Societies, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.LXXVII, No.1, Jan-March, 2016, p.15

<sup>6</sup> Narayan S Kotvi, *The Myth of Gender Equity: Why are Women Missing From Politics*, p.164

<sup>7</sup> Anuradha Rai, Women in Democracies: Quota System and Political Empowerment of Women in Changing Societies, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.LXXVII, No.1, Jan-March, 2016, p.15

candidate positions for women by law and lastly, reserved seats, positions for which only female candidates compete.<sup>8</sup>

According to Global Database Quotas for Women, in the year 2006, around 40 countries have introduced gender quotas in elections to national parliaments, either by means of constitutional amendment or by changing the electoral laws and in more than 50 countries, major political parties have voluntarily set out quota provisions in their own statutes.<sup>9</sup> The introduction of gender quotas in many countries of the world has yielded positive results by increasing the number of women representatives in their national parliaments and also at the local level.<sup>10</sup> Among the top 26 countries with the highest gender equal ratios of representation, 20 have quota systems, including Rwanda which is at the top of the list.<sup>11</sup>

Women leadership still has to cross many stumbling blocks in establishing themselves as leaders in comparison to males. In rural areas, culture and traditions are observed more rigidly. Reservation is just a means towards equality and not an end in itself.<sup>12</sup> But in many cases women have acquired confidence and managed to make some noticeable effects in local power structures.

At the same time, political empowerment alone is not sufficient for women in the exercising of their leadership. They have to be equipped with skills, knowledge and real understanding of their concerns and problems so that they would be influencing

---

<sup>8</sup>[www.global.oup.com](http://www.global.oup.com) accessed on 11.3.2019

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.p.16

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.p.16

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.p.15

<sup>12</sup>U P Mishra, *Emerging Patterns of Women's Political Leadership at Grass roots Level in India*, in Archana Kumari& RK Verma(Eds.) *Women Political Leadership in India: Some Important Dimensions*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p.105

the decision making for solving the various issues relating to their concerns and problems. As such there is a need for all-round development of each and every section of women to have meaningful participation of women in politics.

There are bigger scopes and opportunities created for women in politics and the need of the time is to make them self-assertive and enabled them with some inner strength. There is a paucity of strong women personalities in politics from central to local level and there is also lack of representation of women's issues in the most elected bodies. Women need to participate more effectively in political process.<sup>13</sup> Yet, despite the recent increase in the number of female office holders, particularly at the local level, the real effect of women in power remains a question largely unexplored.<sup>14</sup> A strong women's movement and civil society is another condition which will influence the direction of politics and development in favour of women.<sup>15</sup>

Human settlements are classified as rural or urban depending on the density of human-created structures and resident people in a particular area. Whereas the urban areas can include towns and cities, the rural areas include villages and hamlets.<sup>16</sup> In India, a town whose population is below 15000 is considered as rural, as per the Planning Commission.<sup>17</sup> The Gram Panchayat is responsible for the administration of such type of areas and there is absence of urban body like municipal boards. Majority of the male population in such areas are engaged in agriculture and other related

---

<sup>13</sup> P K Yadav, *Women Leadership in Bihar(A Study of Inhibiting factors and Prospects)* 1984, p.183

<sup>14</sup> Denise Antolini, *Women in Local Government: An overview*, Janet A Flemming (Ed) *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1984

<sup>15</sup> Madhu Singh, *Women's Political Development in India*, Archana opcit. p.289

<sup>16</sup> [www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous](http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous)

<sup>17</sup> <https://keydifferences.com>

activities. In the urban areas, people are engaged in non-agricultural works like trade, commerce and industry.

The Parliamentary form of government in India is a political legacy that India had inherited from the British government. Hence it has the President heading the Indian state while the Prime Minister is the Head of the government. Executive powers of the central government are vested in the council of ministers with the Prime Minister at its head. At the same time, India has followed a federal form of government taken over from the United States where there exist two sets of government, one at the center and the state governments at the periphery. Thus, there are 28 states and nine Union Territories who have their own legislatures in their respective states. The powers and functions are divided between the Central government and the State governments as mentioned in the three lists, Union List, State List and Concurrent List. India has a bicameral legislature in the Parliament and in few states where there are two Houses in the state legislature. In the Parliament, the Upper House is Rajya Sabha and the Lower House is Lok Sabha. The Rajya Sabha is like the US Senate, a permanent house where one-third of the members retire after every two years with a term of six years. The Lok Sabha is the lower house which is composed of members directly elected by the people for a term of five years.

India has also inherited a political and administrative set up from the British who has introduced the institutions of municipal councils and municipal corporations for the administration of the urban areas in India during the latter part of their regime in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Acts have provided for local government bodies meant for rural and urban areas respectively. There are three

types of urban local bodies for the urban areas based on the size of the population of the areas, namely, municipal corporations for large urban areas with population of more than one lakh, municipal council for areas having less than one lakh population and Nagar panchayats for transitional areas i.e rural to urban. The state governments in India are given the responsibility to conduct elections to these local bodies regularly after every five years. The local body for a rural area also consists of three tier structure namely, village panchayat at the village level, panchayat samiti at the block level and zila parishad at the district level.

The Mizoram State Urban Part, with a population of about 5.7 lakhs is India's fourth least populous state.<sup>18</sup> Total geographical area of Mizoram state urban part is 587 square kilometers and it is the eighth smallest urban state by area in the country with a population density of 974 persons per square kilometers.<sup>19</sup> There are eleven districts in the state among which Aizawl urban is the most populous district with urban population of about 3.1 lakhs and Mamit Urban is the least populous district with urban population of about fifteen thousand. Aizawl Urban is the biggest district in the state with urban area of 176 square kilometers and Mamit Urban is the smallest with 41 square kilometers.<sup>20</sup> It is a surprising fact that Mizoram, despite its small population has twenty-three notified/urban towns. Some of these urban towns are not towns in the real sense of term as prescribed by the Census rules but remain as towns as declared by the state government. Eight out of the twenty-three towns have

---

<sup>18</sup> <https://indikosh.com/st/285706/mizoram-23>

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> <https://indikosh.com/st/285706/mizoram-23>

population less than 5000, five towns have less than 10,000 population which denotes that they were not actually qualified as towns.<sup>21</sup>

In Mizoram, right after the time of Indian independence, a proper system of rural administration was set up in the villages known as the village councils which have been set up under the District Councils. As a result of this, the Panchayati Raj system was not followed. There is, thus, a single tier system of local administration for the rural areas. Regarding the urban areas, the Aizawl Municipal Council, which later on became Aizawl Municipal Corporation, has been constituted in the capital city Aizawl for the administration of the city since 2010. Till date, no other such kind of urban local government has been set up in other parts of the state. The fact that there was no clear demarcation of urban and rural areas has made the researcher to accept all the 23 notified towns as urban areas and the rest others as rural areas eventhough there is, so far, only one urban local self-government functioning in the state.

## 1. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS VOTERS

In a democracy, elections constitute a major political activity for the people, perhaps the only one for the poor and the illiterate masses in a developing society like the Indian subcontinent.<sup>22</sup> Voting is the most common political role but at the same time, the most important and effective form of political participation. Women voters always constitute a very important component in democratic countries which also applies for India and the question of voting reflects the position of women in the society. Looking at India, the Constitution has granted voting right to all adult

---

<sup>21</sup>Lalchhuanawma Hrahnel, *Mizoram Statistics 2014*, SB Offset Printing, Aizawl, 2014, p.17

<sup>22</sup>Sampa Guha, *Political Participation of Women in a Changing Society*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1996, p.131



citizens irrespective of sex and thus, voting took place in India right from the first election in independent India wherein women had also participated actively. But till now women voters in India face problems in casting their votes due to illiteracy, preoccupation with household duties, looking after children and polling booth being located far from their homes.

Table 5.0 Regular casting of votes

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	75	96.1	97	94.7
b)No	3	3.8	4	4.2
c)NA	-	-	1	1.1
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

In order to have an indepth knowledge about the political awareness and participation of women voters in Mizoram, the respondents were asked whether they cast their votes regularly in different elections as shown above in Table No.5.0 The respondents were very regular in casting their votes which clearly reflects the high rate of women voter turnout in the state. Among them, the urban women had higher percentage in regularity of voting than their rural counterparts, 96.1 % against 94.7%.

Table 5.1 Reason for casting of vote

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Elect representatives	71	91.1	97	95.09
b) To help candidate win	7	8.9	5	4.91
c) To get favour& benefits	-	-	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Among the urban respondents, 91.1 % replied that they cast their votes to elect their representatives while 8.9 % cast their votes to help a particular candidate win in the election. In the case of rural women, 95.09 % cast their votes to elect representatives while 4.91 % tried to help a particular candidate win in the election. None of the women respondents cast their votes to get favour from the candidates which is one important principle to be followed in democratic countries.

Table 5.1.1 Motivation for voting

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Service to Nation	76	97.43	99	97.05
b) Monetary Allurements	-	-	-	-
c) Request by others	2	2.57	2	1.96
NA	-	-	1	0.98
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

When further asked about what motivate them to cast their votes, among the urban respondents, 97.43 % of them replied that they cast their votes to perform their duties as responsible citizens while the same applies for 97.05 % respondents in the rural areas. 2.57 % of the urban women respondents gave their vote due to request by others while 1.96 % of the rural respondents replied that they cast their vote because of invitation/request from their friends/ relatives / candidates.

Table 5.1.2 Discuss political issues during election times

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	67	85.8	72	70.58
b) No	11	14.1	28	27.4
c) NA	-	-	2	1.96
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Regarding the question relating to discussion of political issues, 85.8 % among the urban women replied positively saying that they used to discuss various issues during the time of elections which denotes that the urban women are quite aware of the happenings around them. But, at the same time, 14.1 replied that they do not discuss politics which indicates that all the urban women have political efficacy. Among the rural women, 70.58 % discuss politics during the time of elections which is much lesser than the urban women but the percentage is still satisfactory.

Table 5.1.3 With whom political issues are discussed

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Parents	12	17.9	5	6.95
b) Husband/Family members	28	41.7	31	43.05
c) Friends/Peer groups	27	40.2	21	29.16
NA	-	-	15	20.80
Total	67	100	72	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

As shown in Table 5.1.3, from among the urban women who discuss politics, 17.9 % discuss with their parents, 41.7 % discuss with their husbands and other family members while 40.2 % discuss it with their friends or peer groups. Among those who discuss politics from the rural areas, 6.95 % discuss with their parents, 43.05 % with their husbands and other family members and 29.16 % with their friends while 20.84% did not respond to the question.

Voter turnout is the extent to which eligible voters use their vote on election day. It is measured by taking the percentage of votes cast in election, including the invalid votes. The role of women in political field can be measured by the turnout of women voters and the number of women candidates in each election and the extent of women's participation in the electoral process.<sup>23</sup> In Mizoram, women voters have been outnumbering male voters for the past few years and is the only state having

<sup>23</sup> M Ramchander and K Lakshmi, *Women and Politics: A Study of Political Participation*, Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1993, p.165

more women voters than men. But paradoxically there has been no women representative in the state legislature for many years in the state until Lalhlimpuii was elected in 1987 and again Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu came into the scene in 2014. According to the voters list published by the state Election Commission in 2013, out of 6,86,305 total voters, there are 3,49,506 female voters and 3,36,799 male voters thus making women voters outnumbering men by 9,806. In 2008, there were 6,08,561 voters in the electoral roll in the state with 3,08,561 women voters and 2,99,902 male voters thus resulting in a gender difference of 6,644 votes. In 2003, there was a difference between the two gender was 3,816. The gender difference between the two electorates, male and female electors have been increasing with each past election years which makes the female political participation in the state an ever-increasing important issue to be considered as females constitute more than half of the total population of the state.

Table. 5.2 Voter Turnout in state Assembly Elections

Year	Voter turnout % in State Election	Voter turnout % Men	Voter turnout % Women	Gender gap
1972	72.9	76.14	69.84	-6.3
1978	63.27	67.82	58.67	- 9.15
1979	68.34	68.17	68.51	+ 0.34
1984	73.43	74.32	NA	
1987	74.80	74.88	74.73	- 0.15
1989	81.30	81.82	80.77	- 0.05
1993	80.75	81.33	80.15	- 1.18
1998	76.32	76.42	76.22	- .20

2003	78.65	78.84	78.46	- .38
2008	80.02	78.77	81.24	+ 2.47
2013	80.82	79.50	82.12	+ 2.62
2018	81.61	80.6	82.6	+2

Source : Election Commission of India

As per the Table 5.2 given above, it can be easily deduced that the overall voter turnout has been increasing in almost all the Assembly Elections with the passage of time. The percentage was quite high with 72.9 % in the first Legislative Assembly Elections and moved down a bit in the second election but increased later on with each election held in the state except for the 1998 Assembly elections. Further study of the gender gap also shows that women had become more and more active in political participation in relation to voting. The increasing pattern of voter turnout rate of women in the State Assembly Elections of Mizoram is very satisfactory in comparison with other states of India and clearly shows the increasing level of political awareness among the women voters in the state.

Table. 5.3 Voter Turnout in Lok Sabha Elections

Year	Voter Turn out in Lok Sabha Election	Voter Turnout % Men	Voter Turnout % Women	Gender Gap
1977	49.93	56.4	43.47	- 12.93
1980	55.75	55.38	56.12	+ 0.74
1989	58.22	60.37	56.08	- 4.29
1991	58.62	60.35	56.89	- 3.46

1996	73.29	72.9	73.9	+ 1
1998	69.54	69.89	69.2	- 0.69
1999	65.3	67.52	63.08	- 4.44
2004	62.97	64.41	61.53	- 2.88
2009	50.97	53.44	48.5	- 4.94
2014	61.7	62.44	60.97	- 1.47
2019	63.06	63.7	62.44	- 1.26

Source : Election Commission of India

Looking at the turn out of voters in the General Elections as given in the above Table 5.3, the turn out rate as a whole is much lower in comparison with the Assembly Elections. The pattern of gender gap also implies that the rate of participation of women is less and outnumbered the rate of their male voters only twice i.e 1980 and 1996 elections. The participation of voters in the Lok Sabha elections has always been lesser than in the State Assembly elections the reason for which may be accounted to having only one representative in the Lok Sabha.

## 2. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CAMPAIGNS

The remarkable feature of women's political participation in Mizoram is that women having comprised of more than half of the total electorates, their participation is also high and visible, at least in the basic party activities if not in the high level activities of the political parties. There has been no women Member of Parliament and only four elected Members in the Legislative assembly but at the same time women have played their due role by working for their own political parties, especially during the time of election campaigns. Women are involved usually in the door-to-door

campaigns before the elections to persuade their friends and neighbours to vote for their candidates.

Table 5.4 Active Membership of Political Party

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	51	65.38	48	47.05
b) No	27	34.62	50	49.01
c) NA	-	-	4	3.92
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

The women respondents were asked if they are active member of any political party to which 65.38 % of the urban women replied that they were members of political parties and 47.05 % of the rural women respondents are party members. From the data collected, it can be deduced in general that the urban women are more active in politics than the women in the rural areas.

Table 5.4.1 Activities in party during elections

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Talks about aims & objectives of party	16	31.37	9	18.75
b) Donate funds	1	1.9	3	6.25
c) Take part in campaigns	23	45.09	17	35.41
d) Do nothing	11	21.56	19	39.58
Total	51	100	48	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018



The women respondents who belonged to some specific political parties were further asked their activities in their party. Among the urban respondents, 51 women out of the 72 respondents replied that they belong to a particular party and out of them, 31.37 % says that they used to talk about the aims and objectives of their party during elections, 1.9 % of them donate funds for the smooth working of their party, another 45.09 % plays an active role by taking part in campaigns during the time of elections. On the other hand, 21.56 % of those who belong to a particular party admits that they did not have any participation in the party activities.

Among the rural respondents, 48 out 102 respondents said that they were members of a particular party among which 18.75 % talks about the aims and objects of their party during the time of election campaigns, 6.25 % donates money to their parties and 35.41 % takes part in the election campaigns at the time of elections. At the same time, there are 39.58 % of the respondents who belong to one party or another but did not take part in any party activities which shows that all the women members of the parties are not active party members.

Table 5.4.2 Whether Parents belong to Political Party

Answers	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	34	43.58	61	59.8
b) No	41	52.56	38	37.25
NA	3	3.84	3	2.94
Total	78	100	102	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

The respondents were further asked whether their parents belong a particular political party to which 43.58 % of the urban respondents had positive answers and 52.56 % said that their parents were not members of any political party. This indicates that more than half of the parents of the respondents did not belong to any particular political party. On the other hand, among the rural women, 59.8 % i.e more than half of the respondents' parents are members of some particular political party.

From Table 5.4, it can be easily concluded that the level of political participation of women in urban areas is very much higher as compared to those in the rural areas. This has been taken on the basis of party membership, donation of funds, campaigning and propagating party ideologies during elections. More women from urban areas participated in the above given activities except in fund donation which implies that there is greater involvement in politics among the urban women. Moreover, among those party members in the urban areas, only 21.56 % of them are inactive members while among the rural women party members, 39.58 % of them do nothing for their party and does not involve themselves in any activities of the political parties.

### 3. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AS CONTESTANTS IN ELECTIONS

At the time when India attained independence, the Indian Constitution which was framed and enacted by the Constituent Assembly was enforced from 1950. It consisted of a special provision for the administration of the hill areas of North East India in the form of the Sixth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. This special provision provided for the formation of District Council, an institution meant for self-administration of the hills people having its own autonomous powers. Hence,

the Lushai District Council was constituted for the Lushai Hills with Pawi-Lakher Regional Council in the southern part of the land. In all of the four elections of the Mizo District council, as it was renamed in 1954 by an act passed by the Lushai District Council,<sup>24</sup> there were no women contestants. There were, however, two lady members, Lalziki Sailo in the first and Maria Hmingliani in the second District Council due to their appointment in the nominated seats.

After Mizoram was elevated to a Union Territory, the first Legislative Assembly election was held in April, 1972. In the first Assembly elections, there were four women candidates among the 155 candidates namely, Sanglianchhungi, an independent candidate contesting in Saitual constituency, Zathangi, Socialist Party candidate, contesting in Tlungvel constituency, Dengchhungi, an independent candidate contesting in Sateek constituency and Rengluti, another independent candidate contesting in the North Vanlaiphai constituency. There were no women elected but the nominated seat was filled up with one lady named Saptawni. Sanglianchhungi, later on became the party president of Mizo Democratic Front, regional party that was formed in April, 1975. She is the first and only female President of a political party functioning in the state of Mizoram till date. The same lady, contested again in the Lok Sabha Elections, 1977, from behind bars and has been again, till date one of the two lady contestants in the Lok Sabha elections from Mizoram.

In the second Assembly elections of May, 1978, there was only one woman candidate, Thanmawii, who got elected from the People's Conference party and

---

<sup>24</sup> "Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act 1954" L 18 of 1954

became the first elected woman legislator in the territory. The third Assembly elections was held in April, 1979 due to a split in the ruling People's Conference party resulting in the defection of eight MLAs. There were three women candidates amongst the 150 candidates in which Thanmawii again got elected from People's Conference Party ticket from the Aizawl East Constituency. Along with her K.Thansiami was given the nominated seat, thus making the presence of two women in the Legislature. The other women candidates were Vanthangi from the Mizo Union Party contesting in Lungpho constituency and Sanglianchhungi of the Mizoram Democratic Front Party contesting in Aizawl West constituency. In the fourth Assembly elections of April, 1984, the lone woman candidate among the one hundred and 33 candidates, K.Thansiami got elected from Aizawl West Constituency contesting on the Mizoram People's Party ticket but her party did not win in the elections. The ruling Congress Party filled up one of the nominated seats with Rokungi which makes two women legislative members. As a result of the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement, the Congress ministry was reshuffled to include the MNF personnel and this coalition ministry functioned for six months after which Mizoram became elevated to a full-fledged state under the Indian union.

In the first Mizoram State Legislative Assembly elections held in February, 1987, there were four women contestants among the one hundred and 45 contestants for the 40 elected seats. The MNF party women candidate, Lalhlimpuii Hmar from Aizawl North I constituency, won in the election and became a Minister of State. The other women candidates were K.Thansiami, former MLA from People's Conference Party and Rualchhingi, Indian National Congress Party's candidate, both contesting in the

same constituency, Aizawl West II. The fourth woman candidate was B.Zodinpuii belonging to the Mizo National Union Party contesting in Aizawl South I constituency.

Due to defection among the MLAs, the MNF ministry was dissolved and fresh election was held in 1989 in which there were four women candidates, three belonging to People's Conference Party namely Saihmingthangi, K.Thansiami and Chhingpuii, Lalhlimpuii, ex-minister from Mizo National Front Party, also contested again from the Aizawl North I constituency but none of them was elected. In the General Legislative Assembly Election held in 1993, there were three woman contestants amongst the 121 candidates namely, Lalhlimpuii from the Mizo National Front Party, contesting for the third time, SD Talukder from the Bharatiya Janata Party and Lalthlamuani, an independent candidate.

In the 1998 Assembly Elections, out of the 221 candidates, there were ten women contesting in the election which has been the highest ever recorded number of women candidates at the time until 2018. They were C.Vanlalruati, an Independent candidate, ST Chakma from Samata Party, H.Zatluangi from Citizens Common Front, J.Rothangpuii from Rashtriya Janata Dal, Lalthanzami, Independent candidate, Lalrinmawii and Lalhmingmawii from Bharatiya Janata party, K.Thansiami and Lalkhumi from Janata Dal and PC Thachhungi from Lok Shakti Party. Despite the increase in the number of women candidates, none of them was elected. This may be attributed to the fact that none of the women candidates were set up from the major political parties functioning in the state. Moreover, even if it can be said that the number of women candidates has been increased, in comparison with the number of

male candidates, it is still very less as it has risen to only 4.5 % from the total number of candidates.

After the completion of the term, election to the Mizoram Legislative Assembly was held again in 2003, there were in total 192 candidates including seven women. The women candidates were Lalramengmawii, Ngurbiaki and Buangthangpuii of Janata Dal United Party, F.Lallawmzuali and Hmingthanzami of Zoram Nationalist Party, Zothankimi of Indian National Congress and K.Zodingliani of Ephraim Union.

The MNF party completed its second term and hence, another Legislative Assembly election was held in 2008 where huge majority of seats was captured by the Indian National Congress. Out of the 206 candidates, there were nine women contestants namely, R.Lalrinawmi and Lalthuammawii of Lok Jan Shakti Party, Ramfangzauvi and Lalnunziri of Bharatiya Janata Party, Vanlalthmingchhuangi of Lok Bharati, Zothankimi of Indian National Congress, H.Lalthmingthangi of Zoram Nationalist Party, Laldinkimi, Independent and Lalhlimpuii of Mizo National Front. No woman candidate was elected, not even from the ruling party's candidate.

In the Assembly election in Mizoram which was held in the year 2013, there were six women candidates from the total of one hundred and forty-two candidates. They are Ramfangzauvi, Zoramchhani and C.Lalnunziri of Bharatiya Janata Party, Lalmalsawmi of Mizo National Front, Tlangthanmawii of Indian National Congress and B.Sangkhumi, independent candidate.

Eventhough there were women contestants now and then, no one has been elected to become a member of the legislature except in the bye election of Hrangturzo

constituency where Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu was elected in the seat vacated by Lalthanhawla, the former chief minister in 2014. Thus, there was a lady member of legislature after 30 years of absence of women. The lone lady member of the Mizoram Legislature became a minister of state on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2017, as a result of reshuffling of the Cabinet. She was holding portfolios of Cooperation Department, Fisheries Department and Sericulture Department.

Thus, there had been no woman legislator in Mizoram for three decades until the by-elections held in 2014. The Congress candidate, Tlangthanmawii, was the president of the women's wing of Congress party and the MNF party's candidate, Lalmalsawmi, was an executive member in the Aizawl Municipal Council. Both of them were defeated by male candidates of rival political parties. The three women candidates fielded by the BJP party fared very badly for which reason may be attributed due to the unpopularity of BJP in the state. The lone woman independent candidate, B.Sangkhumi, former president of the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), the largest woman organisation in Mizoram, also lost in the election. A lady councilor of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation also commented that women candidates are always given tickets in areas where the political parties are not having stronghold and are not hoping to win in the elections.

The Chief Electoral Officer, Ashwini Kumar said, "Congress and MNF women candidates were fielded against heavy weight candidates while other parties who fielded women candidates have little political base in the state. Therefore, no woman could get elected to the state assembly elections"<sup>25</sup> Looking at the women candidates,

---

<sup>25</sup> Post.Jagran.com/Mizoram, 24<sup>th</sup> october,2013

they were women who had earned fame and popularity in various fields including politics, social service and the like but they had all lost to their male rivals which denoted that they had been set up by their parties in places where the party had thin chances of winning the seats. This has been clearly expressed by the CEO, Ashwini Kumar.

Table. 5.5 Candidate's status and locality

Sl.No	Name	Party	Year	No.of Times Contested	Rural/Urban
1	Zathangi	Socialist	1972	1	Urban
2	Dengchhungi	Ind	1972	1	Urban
3	Rengluti	Ind	1972	1	Urban
4	Sanglianchhungi	Ind	1972,1979	2	Urban
5	Thanmawii	PC	1978,1979	2 Elected	Urban
6	Vanthangi	MU	1979	1	Urban
7	Lalhlimpuii Hmar	MNF	1987,1989 1993,2008	4	Urban
8	K.Thansiarni	PC	1987,1989 1998	3	Urban
9	Rualchhingi	INC	1987	1	Urban
10	B.Zodinpuui	MNU	1987	1	Urban
11	Saihmingthangi	PC	1989	1	Urban
12	Chhingpuui	PC	1989	1	Urban
13	SD Talukder	BJP	1993	1	Rural



14	Lalthlamuani	Ind	1993	1	Rural
15	C.Vanlalruati	Ind	1998	1	Rural
16	ST Chakma	Samata	1998	1	Rural
17	H.Zatluangi	CCF	1998	1	Urban
18	J.Rothangpuii	RJD	1998	1	Urban
19	Lalthanzami	Ind	1998	1	Urban
20	Lalrinmawii	BJP	1998	1	Urban
21	Lalhmingmawii	BJP	1998	1	Urban
22	Lalkhumi	PC	1998	1	Urban
23	Thachhungi	Lok Shakti	1998	1	Rural
24	Lalramengmawii	JDU	2003	1	Urban
25	Ngurbiaki	JDU	2003	1	Urban
26	Buangthangpuii	JDU	2003	1	Urban
27	F.Lallawmzuali	ZNP	2003	1	Urban
28	Hmingthanzami	ZNP	2003	1	Urban
29	Zothankimi	INC	2003,2008	2	Urban
30	K.Zodingliani	Ephraim Union	2003	1	Urban
31	R.Lalrinawmi	LJS	2008	1	Urban
32	Lalthuammawii	LJS	2008	1	Urban
33	Ramfangzauvi	BJP	2008,2013	2	Urban
34	Lalnunziri	BJP	2008,2013	2	Urban
35	Vanlalhmingchhuangi	Lok Bharti	2008	1	Urban

36	H.Lalhmingthangi	ZNP	2008	1	Urban
37	Laldinkimi	Ind	2008	1	Urban
38	Zoramchhani	BJP	2013	1	Urban
39	Lalmalsawmi	MNF	2013	1	Urban
40	Tlangthanmawii	INC	2013	1	Urban
41	B.Sangkhumi	Ind	2013	1	Urban
42	Lalzenghaki	Ind	2018	1	Urban
43	F.Lalrintluangi	Ind	2018	1	Urban
44	Judy Zohmingliani	BJP	2018	1	Urban
45	LalruatfeliHlawndo	Ind	2018	1	Urban
46	C.Lalnunziri	BJP	2018	1	Urban
47	LalhrilzeliHlawndo	Ind	2018	1	Urban
48	K.Lalrinpuii	NCP	2018	1	Urban
49	T.Lalmalsawmi	BJP	2018	1	Urban
50	Lalthlamuani	Ind	2018	1	Urban
51	R.Lalchhuanawmi	Ind	2018	1	Urban
52	F.Lalremsangi	BJP	2018	1	Urban
53	Laldinngheti	BJP	2018	1	Urban
54	Lalduhpuii	BJP	2018	1	Urban
55	Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu	INC	2014,2018	2	Urban
56	Lalrinpuii	Ind	2018	1	Urban

Source : Election Commission of India and Researcher's own calculations

From the above table, it can be seen that there have been, so far, only 56 women candidates for the twelve State assembly Elections that had been held in the state. Of these 56 women, 48 women had contested only once while six women contested twice, one woman for three times and another one woman contested four times. One lady from the People's conference Party, Thanmawii, who contested twice in 1978 and 1979 managed to get herself elected in both the elections and is the only lady who has been elected two times. One more lady belonging to the People's Conference Party also remained as a member of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly for two terms, first as a nominated member and the second term as an elected representative. Another lady named Lalhlimpuii Hmar from the Mizo National Front Party, contested four times but was elected only once. However, she became the first lady minister in the state during MNF government. Another woman, Sanglianchhungi, who had contested twice in the Assembly elections in 1972 and 1979, had also contested in the Lok Sabha election in 1977 and has been the first woman contesting in the Lok Sabha election from Mizoram. So far, only two women had contested in the Lok Sabha elections including the last Lok Sabha elections of 2019 where a woman named Lalthlamuani contested from Ephraim Israel, an unrecognized party. Almost all of the contestants are from urban areas of the state which denotes that urban women had more political participation in terms of candidature in comparison to rural women.

#### 4. WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTIES

The increase in turnout of women voters, particularly of the rural areas, may be attributed to a high degree of mobilisation rather than their own political

consciousness. The political parties have also recognised the significance of the women voters who constitute half of the electorates, and have been devising various methods to capture their votes mostly by making promises for their betterment. It is crucial to analyze women's position within the political parties. Because it is the parties that control access to government posts and thus the distribution of power.<sup>26</sup> Women are generally not inclined towards membership in political parties and even when they become members, majority of them are not active members. Even when there are some active members, it is found that there was only negligible number of members in the executive levels of the different political parties functioning at the national level as well as among the regional parties. Thus, in general, women are more visible at the local level and less visible in the higher positions both in the party as well as in the government and that, the more powerful a political body, the lower the representation of women in it.<sup>27</sup>

The women's wing of political parties have been more active in party mobilization, particularly during elections, than in interest articulation and the political power tends to flow through the main organizational bodies of parties and through their respective front organizations of students, youth, labour and peasants rather than through women's organizations.<sup>28</sup> The percentage of women active in party organizations declined greatly with the more visible, more powerful and more competitive positions in the party echelons. This can be seen clearly in all the

---

<sup>26</sup> Barbara Nelson and Najma Chowdhury , *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.179

<sup>27</sup> Ambedkar S Nagendra and Shilaja Nagendra , *Role of Women in Panchayati Raj*, ABD Publishers, Jaipur,2006, p.33

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Nelson and Najma Chowdhury, *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, p.101

political parties functioning in the state of Mizoram. The first political party in Mizoram, the Mizo Union Party since its inception in 1946 till its merger into the Congress in 1974 never had any woman among its office bearers during its long functioning of twenty-eight years. The first opposition party, United Mizo Freedom Organisation also was also no different from the Mizo Union party. Both the two parties did not have any woman candidate in all the elections that they had contested during the period of Mizo District Council.

The political parties started setting up women candidates from 1972 when Mizoram became a Union Territory with 33 members in the legislature. As can be seen from Table 5.5, there has been in total 56 women who have contested in the various elections held in the state among which fifteen candidates were independent candidates. The Bharatiya Janata Party had the most number of women candidates with twelve of them contesting in the years 1993, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018 Assembly elections. The People's Conference Party had five women candidates who contested in 1978, 1979, 1987, 1989 and 1998 elections. The Indian National Congress had three women candidates contesting in 1987, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018 Assembly elections. Janata Dal United had three women candidates contesting in the year 2003 while the Zoram Nationalist Party also had three female candidates who contested in 2003 and 2008. Mizo National Front Party had two female candidates who contested in the years 1987, 1989, 1993, 2008 and 2013. Similarly, Lok Jan Shakti Party had two candidates so far in 2008. Other smaller parties in the state like Mizo Union, Lok Shakti, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samata party, Mizo

National Union, Socialist Party, Citizen's Common front, Nationalist Congress Party and Ephraim Union had one candidate each in the past elections.

The MNF party leader, Zoramthanga, in his interview stated that his party lacks suitable candidate among the women members and further declared that if there was strong woman available, he would gladly nominate her in the forthcoming elections.<sup>29</sup> Since 1987, after Mizoram became a state and the MNF fought the elections for the first time, for the party, there has been only one woman MLA in the legislature, Lalhlimpuii who was made a minister-of-state by the MNF ministry. This lack of suitable women for candidature is a problem faced not only by the MNF party but is also found in other parties too.

Regarding the reluctance of the political parties to give candidature to women, Lalthanhawla, the INC party leader also said in his interview on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2018, his party had one woman candidate in the 2013 assembly elections but she lost her seat. In the bye-elections held a year later, another woman was elected who was given a ministerial position. He further stated that he wanted to have at least one woman MLA for every Congress ministry but has not yet materialized. However, he said that women had begun contesting in the municipalities and village council elections due to reservations of seats which resulted in bringing changes gradually in the patriarchal Mizo society. Moreover, every political party has a frontal organization for women like the Mizoram Pradesh Mahila Congress which is very strong right from the grassroot level.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com> downloaded on 10/4/2019

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

Besides their candidature in the elections, women also played their due role in the party organisations of different political parties which had functioned or functioning in the state. As already mentioned before, one party known as Mizo Democratic Front which was formed in April, 1974 had a woman, Sanglianchhungi, as its president and is the one and only party having a woman leader at its top. In March, 1997 another party known originally as Mizo National Front (Nationalist) was formed which also happened to have a lady vice-president, Lalbiakdiki w/o Laldenga (L) and the party later on changed its name to the Zoram Nationalist Party after functioning for three years. The Zoram Nationalist Party has been functioning till present time but has not formed the government as yet. At the same time, as has been mentioned before, the higher the party ladder, the lesser the number of women. As such, within the ZNP party, among the five office bearers, there is a lady treasurer as in 2018, among the ten PAC members, there is one woman present and the party also has four women secretaries in-charge of different works. Some political parties like the Mizo People's Conference never had any women member among its office bearers. It can be seen that among the different political parties functioning in the state, the Indian National Congress has the most number of women in its executive body because of its policy of reservation of seats within the party organisation. The constitution of INC provides that thirty-three percent of seats at different committees shall be reserved for women<sup>31</sup>. This is not strictly followed but at the same time, among the forty executive member posts, seven seats are always reserved for the women members. The general secretary post had been held by two elected women in

---

<sup>31</sup>Lalmalsawma Khiangte, *Analysing Political Participation of Women in Mizoram* in C.Lalkima&Lalneihzovi (Eds.) *Participation of Women in Politics and Governance: Local and State in Mizoram*, Lois Bet Print &Publication, Aizawl, 2018, p.101

the past but not in the later years. In the recent year, there are three women secretaries, two elected and one appointed who are greatly involved in the party administration.

Looking at the MNF party, among the many elected and appointed office bearers, general secretaries and other important members within the party organisation, there has never been any woman present so far. However, among the 72 secretaries, there are five women who happened to be the only representatives of women in the official category of the party excluding the women's wing known as the Mizo National Women Front. All the parties, besides their headquarters in Aizawl city have set up sub-headquarters in all the district capitals of the state where many women occupied important posts in them. Moreover, if one looks closely at the aims and objectives of the different political parties, none of the parties have given issues concerning women. This is further revealed with the analysis of the election manifestoes which the different political parties framed at the time of elections. The Manifesto of the Indian National Congress in 2013 contained 30 points which includes different development programmes like NLUP, Border Trade, Youth Development, Sports Development, Education, power generation and others among which only two points may be considered as women's concern namely, Reduction of Maternal Mortality Rate and Establishment of Women and Child Development Department.<sup>32</sup> Other than the INC, none of the other parties, as coalition or otherwise, has included women's issues in any of their manifestoes.

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid,p.103



An analysis of the party organisation and the role of women therein revealed that firstly, there was a minimal presence of women in all the parties especially at the higher levels of the organisational hierarchy. Secondly, the women occupying these whatsoever few posts in the parties belong to urban areas of the state which is found not only in the headquarters but also in the different sub-headquarters of the different districts.

#### 5. WOMEN IN AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT COUNCILS

There are three autonomous district councils functioning in the state namely, Lai Autonomous District Council, Mara Autonomous District Council and Chakma Autonomous District Council. The three autonomous district councils were created from the Pawi-Lakher regional Council which came into existence along with the Mizo District Council just after the Indian independence. When Mizoram was granted the status of Union Territory, the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was trifurcated into three regional councils which were later on, upgraded into autonomous district councils. Elections of the autonomous district councils which included both the elections of the member of the district councils as well as the members of the village councils, are conducted by the State Election Commission of Mizoram.

Looking at the Lai Autonomous District Councils, there has been ten elections of the MDCs held so far, women were absent from the first to the fourth elections (1972-1988). However, women started appearing in the political scene from the fifth election held in 1992 as one seat was started to be reserved for women whereby K.Zapari was appointed in the nominated seat and she was nominated again in the

sixth election of 1997 to the Lai Autonomous District Council. In the seventh election held in 2002, another woman, H.Remhnuni was appointed for the nominated seat and in the eighth election of the Lai Autonomous District Council, a woman by the name of Rinchhungi was nominated for one of the four nominated seats held in 2005. The election of the District Council was held again in 2010 in which Lalrinpuii was nominated for the reserved seat. In the 2015 election of the Lai Autonomous District Council, for the first time in its history, a woman named Sangnawni of the Indian National Congress, was elected. Sangnawni was appointed as Chairman of Town Committee which is a very prestigious position with a rank to the Executive Member but without specific portfolio in the Council. The two nominated members in the Council are Rualthanchhingi and B Vanpari which makes the presence of three women members in the Lai Autonomous District Council with the record of highest number of women members till date. At present, the District Council has 27 members with 23 elected and 4 nominated members. There are 95 village councils functioning within the area of Lai Autonomous District Council in which one seat in each of the village councils are reserved for women.

Different political parties have established the women frontal organisations in the district to encourage more women to take part in politics. The political parties which set up the women organization are Indian National Congress, Mizo National Front, Mizoram People,s Conference, Bharatiya Janata Party and the Zoram Nationalist Party. Despite the setting up and functioning of the women frontal organization and

the involvement of women in them, the political parties are very reluctant to give party tickets to women party members.<sup>33</sup>

The Mara Autonomous District Council has 28 members, 25 elected and 3 nominated members. In the District Council, unlike its two other partners, there was the presence of one elected woman member in the first election held in the district. Her name is Ngony Hlychho and was the daughter of a Mara chief. After the first term was over, women were absent for a long time in the Council, from the second election to the fifth election (1978-1990). But in the sixth election of the Council, a woman called J.Maki was appointed in the nominated seat and from then onwards, atleast one woman has always been nominated as member of the House. Lalbiaklangi V Hlychho, N.Ngothlua, A.Dawzu were the women who were nominated in the seventh, eighth and ninth elections of the Mara Autonomous District Council respectively. In the ninth election, another woman, N.Naphie was elected in the elections and she became the second elected member of the Mara Autonomous District Council which resulted in the presence of two women in the Council. N.Naphie was appointed as Executive Member (EM) and she was the first woman EM in the Mara Autonomous District Council. As passed by the Council's deliberation to appoint two women members in the three nominated seats, in the General Elections of Mara District Council held in 2012, two women were nominated namely, N.Nunkungi and Julie B.Ngokei, both belonging to the Indian National Congress. In the 11<sup>th</sup> term of the Mara District Council functioning from 2017, A.Merry and Ngunsuii were appointed for nominated seats. Similarly, for the

---

<sup>33</sup>Jangkhongam Doungei, *Role of Women in the Politics of Sixth Schedule Area of Mizoram*, Harendra Sinha and B.Lalrinchhani (Eds.), *Women in Mizo Society*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2013, p.107

92 Village Councils functioning within the area of Mara District Council, one seat has been reserved irrespective of the number of members in village councils.

The political parties functioning in the Mara Autonomous District Council like the Indian National Congress, Mizo National Front, Mizoram People's Conference, Bharatiya Janata Party, Zoram Nationalist Party and Maraland Democratic Front had set up their women frontal organization and involved their women in political activities which help the women to move forward even if there are less women MDCs.

The Chakma Autonomous District Council has in total 24 members with 20 elected and 4 nominated members. In the Chakma District Council, there was absence of women for a long time from the first to the fifth elections (1972-1993). Only from the sixth election, there were two women present in the Council namely, Snehadini Talukdar and Arati Chakma, elected and nominated respectively. In the seventh election, one woman, Champa Chakma got the nominated seat and no other woman was elected this time. In the eighth election of the District Council, Arati Chakma, who lost in the previous election, was elected and became the second woman elected to the Chakma District Council and held the post of Executive Member (EM). There is also another woman named Belpudi Chakma in the nominated seat belonging to Indian National Congress.

Next election of the District Council was held again in 2013 in which there was no woman elected member but two women from the Indian National Congress were nominated, Sneha Maya and Niharmala Chakma. In the tenth General Election to Chakma Autonomous District Council, one woman, Kusum Lota Chakma was

elected from BJP ticket. She was an EM for some time but could not enjoy full term due to change in the government. In the Chakma District Council, unlike the other two district councils, no reservation is made for women in the nominated seats but there is more presence of women in the council both as elected and nominated members. On the other hand, reservation of one seat is made for women in all of the 83 village councils functioning within the area of the council. In this area too, there are different political parties which function with their women's wings of the party.

## 6. WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Right after the Constitution of India came into force, in accordance with the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the Lushai Hills was given an autonomy with the formation of the District Council for the area known previously as the Lushai District Council. Among the different works performed by the district Council, a very important act known as the Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953 was passed by the Lushai District Council for the purpose of administration of the area. The Act was assented by the Governor of Assam on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 1953 and published in the Assam Gazette on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1953.<sup>34</sup> Since then, elections of the village council have been regularly held after every three years. Looking at all the village council elections that have taken place in Mizoram, one finds very minimal presence of women in them until the passage of the Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Amendment Act of 2014 which has amended its membership by introduction of 33% reservation of seats for women. From the very beginning of the functioning of the village councils in Mizoram in the year 1954, the number of

---

<sup>34</sup> J Zahluna, *Village Councils in Mizoram: The Structure and Function*, J.K. Patnaik (Ed.) *Mizoram Dimensions and perspective*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2008, p.263

elected women members is minimal. In the first village council elections held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April - 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1954, two women were elected out of the 338 village councils. It was no better in the following elections during the period of Mizo District Council. Then came the era of the Union Territory in which the number of elected women was slightly increased especially in the Aizawl district and Lunglei district. In the village council elections of 1975, only one woman candidate was elected who was from Aizawl District. The village council elections held in 1982 also elected only two women who were also from Aizawl.<sup>35</sup>

After Mizoram became a full-fledged state, in the first village council election held in 1987, four women were elected from Aizawl district and again three women were elected in the bye election that followed in 1988. In 1990, the number of elected women rose to 18 and again became 23 in 1994 but declined in 1997 to 15. The next village council elections showed a slight increase with 20 members in 1999. However the highest number of elected women members of village council was found in 2002 where 54 women were elected, 42 from Aizawl district, 8 from Lunglei, 2 from Mamit and 1 member each from Kolasib and Champhai. There was a decline again in 2006 where only 34 members were elected, 25 from Aizawl district, 6 from Lunglei and one each from Serchhip, Kolasib and Mamit, the number declines further to only 31 in 2009 in which 22 were elected from Aizawl district, 6 from Lunglei district and one each from from Serchhip, Kolasib and Mamit.<sup>36</sup> In this

---

<sup>35</sup> T.Vanlaltlani, *Mizo Hmeichhiate leh Village Council Rorelna* in Lalneihzovi (Ed.), *Hmeichhiate Lamtluang*, All Mizoram Women Federation, 2013, p.136

<sup>36</sup> Irene Colbert, *Participation of women in Village Councils in Mizoram* in C.Lalkima and Lalneihzovi (Eds.), *Participation of Women in Politics and Governance: Local and State in Mizoram*, IIPA, Mizoram Branch, Women's Studies Centre, MZU, Aizawl, 2018

election, five women members held the post of Village Council President, four were Vice-Presidents and five were Treasurers.<sup>37</sup>

In 2012, due to the formation of Aizawl Municipal Council, the number of village council was reduced from 555 in 2009 to 508. In this year, there were 88 women contestants and 23 were successful. In Aizawl city, of the 82 local councils with 522 seats, 87 women contested in the election and 27 of them came out victorious. It may be noted that more women get elected as members of local bodies in the urban areas as compared to those in the rural areas. This can also be said for the previous elections of the local bodies as more women used to be elected from Aizawl district and Lunglei district. Overall, in all the elections mentioned above, the number of elected women members has never crossed more than 3 % till the last election which implements one-third reservation of seats for women. However, as mentioned before, in the latest local body elections held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 in Aizawl city, under the Municipal Council, in the 83 local councils, 143 seats were reserved for women out of 535 seats and out of the 2270 members in the village councils, 599 seats were reserved for women which results in the presence of larger number of women members in these local bodies.

The one and only urban local government found in the state, the Aizawl Municipal Council and later on, upgraded to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation, which was constituted in 2007 started functioning from 2010 held its first election on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010 in which one-third reservation of seats was put into practice for the

---

<sup>37</sup>Lalneihzovi, Women and Political Empowerment in Mizoram, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. LX, No.3, July-September, 2014

first time in Mizoram.<sup>38</sup> There were 14 contestants from different political parties including one independent candidate for the six reserved seats. The second election of the Aizawl Municipal Council took place on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 and for the six reserved seats for women, there was a little increase in the number of women candidates which rose to 18 without any independent candidate. Thus, all the women candidates belong to one party or the other which are functioning in Mizoram without any independent candidate. In both the two elections that had been held so far, none of the women contested in the general wards which showed the necessity of seat reservation for women in the functioning of urban local self-government in Mizoram.

All the village councils functioning within the boundary of then Aizawl Municipal Council were transformed into Local Councils whereby one-third of the membership is reserved for women just as being practised by the Municipal Council in accordance with the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution. At present, there are 83 Local Councils functioning within the area of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation.

## CONCLUSION

Participation of women voters in Mizoram is quite satisfactory as can be seen from the percentage of voter turnout in the different elections held in the state. This fact has also been revealed from the survey carried out by the researcher among the women voters. But at the same time, with regard to their participation in terms of real interest in politics shown by the motives behind their voting and discussion of

---

<sup>38</sup>Lallawmawma John C and David Zothansanga , *Women Participation in Aizawl Municipal Council*, C.Lalkima and Lalneihzovi (Eds.) *Participation of Women in Politics and Governance: Local and State in Mizoram*, IIPA, Mizoram Branch, Women's Studies Centre, MZU, Aizawl, 2018



political issues, the urban women are much more politically aware as compared to their rural counterparts.

Regarding the membership of political parties, more than half of the respondents from the urban areas replied that they were active members while those respondents from the rural areas are less in number. More women from the urban areas talk about the aims and objectives of their party and there are more urban women who take part in campaigning during elections. All these data collected clearly emphasizes the activeness of the urban women in comparison with those of their rural counterparts.

Analysis of the political party organization clearly revealed that there is minimal presence of women in them. The under representation of women in politics can be attributed to the conservative nature shown by all the political parties including both the national as well as regional parties. This is clearly revealed in their allotment of tickets during the time of elections which have been held in the state. The reason for less number of women contestants is mainly because of the reason that women were not considered as winning candidates by the political parties. Further, it has been mentioned by all the women contestants from the major political parties functioning in the state that they had to fight more within their parties during the time of ticket allotment than in time of the real elections held in the state. This clearly points out that women party members face more opposition to get party tickets than it was for male members.

By studying the women contestants in the various elections, it can be seen that most of the active women of political parties belonged to urban areas of the state. Rural women are visible only in the time of village council elections by contesting in their

respective villages and that too happened mostly after the adoption of one-third reservation of seats in accordance with the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment. The reason for participation of rural women in the village councils is a result of the reservation of seats for women in the local government which, thereby, increase the winnability chance of the women-folks.

The three Autonomous District Councils in the southern part of the state is not much different from the rest of the state with respect to the participation of women in politics. In the Lai Autonomous District Council, there has been only one elected woman member besides the six nominated members in all the elections that had taken place so far. In the Mara Autonomous District Council, a woman was elected in the first election but it was followed by absence of elected woman till the ninth election thus making the number of elected members to two besides the eight nominated members. In the Chakma Autonomous District Council, the women fared better in the elections eventhough they appeared only after 1993. There were three elected women in the council so far besides the nominated women members. Until the introduction and implementation of the reservation of seats in the nominated seats, women were almost all the time missing from the Councils. Same is the case with the different village councils within their areas. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of participation of women in politics is quite low which is more so in the rural areas as compared to the urban areas of the state.

## CHAPTER – VI

### STATUS AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Leadership is an influencing process which assists individuals in groups to attain their goals. It refers to a quality of a person who leads a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. There are two approaches of leadership which can be mentioned as trait leadership and process leadership. Trait leadership approach suggests that there are certain people in the society who have inborn qualities of leadership which makes them stand out as leaders.<sup>1</sup> The process leadership approach, on the other hand, suggests that leadership is a process that can be learned and available to all. Leadership has also been divided into two forms, assigned leadership and emergent leadership. Assigned leadership is based on formal appointments to leadership positions in organizations whereas emergent leadership is acquired as a result of what one does and how he acquires support from followers. Leadership applies to both these two types in political process.<sup>2</sup>

Two Wall Street Journal reporters have introduced a new vernacular, ‘ the glass ceiling ’ which have been used to denote an invisible barrier which is preventing women from climbing up to leadership positions.<sup>3</sup> This glass ceiling is a global phenomenon which is visible all over the world whereby women are disproportionately concentrated in the lower positions and are hardly visible in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Sushma Yadav, *Dimensions of women Leadership*, in Archana Kumari and RK Verma (Eds.) *Women Political Leadership in India: Some Important Dimensions*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p.14

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>3</sup> Archana Kumari, *opcit*, p.19

leadership positions. Although the glass ceiling still exists, one can say that there is much progress in the breaking of the glass ceiling, be it in business or political leadership. One can clearly see that there is an increase in the number of women holding top positions in various fields but one find the least increase in political field.<sup>4</sup>

Leadership is basically the execution of a particular kind of role with an organised group or society and this role is defined essentially in terms of power or the ability to influence others.<sup>5</sup> Political leadership does not occur in vacuum but rests and wield power from the people living in a community or society. The basic components of political leadership are power, formal position and supported of and acceptance by the community.<sup>6</sup> Women political leadership (WPL) can be examined in the context of three major dimensions-emergence, nature and roles. Dynastic succession is the most frequently used explanation for women's rise to political leadership in Asia resulting mainly from emergency dynastic succession, martyrdom resulting to transferal of charisma onto the successor or due to higher moral capital of women as asserted by Hellmann-Rajanayan.<sup>7</sup>

## GLOBAL CONTEXT

The status of women's political leadership is not satisfactory globally. The percentage of women legislators all over different parliaments of the world taken

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Mona Tabassum, *Psychodynamics of Women Political Leadership Some Reflections* in Archana Kumari and RK Verma (Eds.) *Women Political Leadership in India: Some Important Dimensions*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p.244

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,p.247

<sup>7</sup> Claudia Derichs & Mark Thomson (Eds.), *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in South Asia*, Project Discussion Paper No.8, 2004, p.2

together has not been more than 24.1 % of the world's population with very few countries having women as head of the state and government. Women's increased participation in formal politics will depend not only on the more equitable sharing of reproductive, domestic, productive and communal activities, but also on the transformation of norms of parties and their affiliated organisations and on the strength of civil society.<sup>8</sup>

Within the male-dominated world of politics, women politicians must prove that it did make a difference when more women are elected and women in politics should be able to change both political culture and the laws.<sup>9</sup> The Beijing Declaration (1995) says "We are convinced that Women's Empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality on the basis of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace".<sup>10</sup>

Despite the fact that Australia became the first country to grant to women the right to vote and stand for election to the Commonwealth Parliament in 1902, women were absent from public life until the 1970s. It took 41 years for women to get elected to the federal Parliament during which period only a handful of women were elected to state Parliaments. Mere provisions for women's political rights will not immediately bring about changes in their position and there are several factors like apathetic attitude of political parties, women's lack of access to skill and training, illiteracy, information isolation, cultural and traditional barriers, stereotypical gender role.

---

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Nelson & Najma Chowdhury, *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 17-18

<sup>9</sup> Syamala D Devi and G.Lakshmi, Political Empowerment of Women in Indian Legislature: A Study, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.LXVI, No.1, Jan-March, 2005

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*,

In Costa Rica, women's access to positions of political power has really been very helpful in promoting the status of women. The women ministers had been influential enough to bring changes in favour of women despite the bureaucratic sluggishness of the country. The minister of justice, Odio, had helped in transforming the legal codes and equalise the legal rights of men and women. Another woman minister of the country, Carmen Naranjo, minister of culture, youth and sports, on whose initiation, the Women's Bureau was formed in 1975. The Women's Bureau which was funded by the government became larger in 1987 and was changed into the National Center for the Development of Women and the Family, which gives training for women community leaders in urban and rural areas besides the multifarious functions it performs for promoting women.<sup>11</sup>

Carmen Naranjo was a writer and politician during the 1960s and 70s which then, was very uncommon for a woman in Latin America. She had not only represented the capacity of women to achieve positions of relevance in a traditional society but was also a pioneer in her views about culture, literature and writing, media and communications. She was an early proponent of gender equality in Costa Rica which has become a law in the present day. Costa Rica even has a female President, Laura Chinchilla, a very great outcome of the work of Carmen Naranjo and others in the country.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Mirta Gonzalez-Suarez, Mirta, *With Patience and Without Blood: The Political Struggle of Costa Rican Women* in Barbara Nelson & Najma Chowdhury (Eds.), *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p.181

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*

## INDIAN CONTEXT

Women Members of Parliament like Pramila Dandavate and Geeta Mukherjee have brought about the amendment of the dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, 1984 and again in 1986 which broadened the language prohibiting dowry giving to include requests for gifts, not just before marriage but even after it and the burden of proof was shifted to the accused and not the victim.

The Shah Bano case of 1985 was decided by the Supreme Court that the ex-husband should provide alimony to his ex-wife Shah Bano which was protested by the husband who appealed to the Muslim religious leaders. The Muslim religious leaders began protesting against the government on grounds of interfering with Muslim personal law mentioned in the sharia and started threatening the Cong (I) government. The government acceded to their demand and passed the Muslim Women's Act in 1986 which pushed Muslim women back by centuries. A step was taken by the then president of Mahila Dakshata Samiti and a former member of Parliament, Promila Dandavate, by requesting the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to repeal the Muslim Women's Act of 1986 as it was soon followed by the Hindu fundamentalists to practice and glorify Sati which proved to be true in the year that followed.

Vijaya Raje Scindia, the queen dowager of Gwalior State and senior leader of BJP and sitting member of the Lok Sabha defended sati at a function of the BJP Mahila Morcha. The percentage of women in the Lok Sabha has fluctuated between 8.1 percent in 1984 and 3.4 percent in 1977, and in 1996 was 7.1 percent. The issue of reservations for women had come up in the Constituent Assembly but had been rejected by women representatives as it was felt to be unnecessary and

underestimated the strength of women to compete as equals. Twenty-five years later, the Committee on the Status of Women in India considered the same question. It was agreed that rural women's empowerment and problems had remained undervalued and invisible. The Committee therefore unanimously recommended the establishment of statutory women's panchayats.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the fact that women representation in the Indian Parliament has always been very low, there are some women leaders who have occupied important places in the Indian politics. Mention may be made of women leaders like Mayawati of Bahujan Samaj Party, Jayalalitha of AIADMK, Mamata Banerji of Trinamool Congress, Indira Gandhi and her daughter-in-law, Sonia Gandhi of the Indian National Congress, who all have and had been able leaders of their parties and were able to make their own decisions in leading their parties which affected not only the politics of their region but even the course of the national politics. Some of them rose to their position due to proximity with male leaders who may happen to be their family members or close friends while there are also some who had climbed up through their contribution and hardwork.

Indira Gandhi was one of the strongest political leaders in the world. Her style of leadership was totally different from that of Nehru. She had personalised and centralised the Indian politics. Structure of the Congress party also changed qualitatively and the Prime Minister's office was greatly centralised with power. The personalisation and centralisation of the political authority has even resulted in the rise of terrorism within the country due to the feeling of negligence of some regions

---

<sup>13</sup> Nivedita Menon Ed, *Gender and Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p.27



by the Central government. Indira's autocratic leadership had also led to a split in the Congress party and her faction came to be known as Congress I. It was during her regime that Emergency was declared for the first time in India in 1975. She had adopted populist policy to gain support of the people and she had been successful in doing so. She has been the only woman Prime Minister and the only Prime Minister who was assassinated in Indian politics.

Sonia Gandhi, the daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi, became the congress I President after displacing Sitaram Kesri from presidentship. When she became the president of the Congress I, she emphasised on re-organising the party. She led a protest march on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1998 against the BJP government in failing to control price rise and other failures. She was elected to the parliament in 1999 and became the Leader of the Opposition in the 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha. The BJP government led by Vajpayee fell on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 1999 in which Sonia Gandhi played a key role in toppling down the government. She was also an important leader in rejuvenating the Congress party after the death of her mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi and her husband Rajiv Gandhi.

#### MIZORAM CONTEXT

On the eve of the Indian independence, the Lushai Hills was visited by the Bardoloi Committee to consider what kind of status was to be given to the area after India got independence. To meet this Committee, the District Conference appointed six member committee in which Lalziki Sailo, a female was one of the members.<sup>14</sup> The first ever active presence of Mizo women in the politics of Mizoram may said to be

---

<sup>14</sup>Sangkima, Women and Politics in Mizoram Through The Ages, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol.III, Issue.I, Mizo History Association, July, 2002, p.27

in the 'Advisory Council' which looked after the welfare of the Mizo people before the formation of the District Council in the Lushai Hills. Two seats were reserved for women in the Council, one seat each from Aizawl town and Lunglei town which was said to be a result of the pressure made by the Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual, the first ever women organisation in the history of Mizoram. Lalsangpuii was elected from Aizawl town under much controversy regarding the candidacy and Remthangi was elected from Lunglei town. After the formation of the District Council, one seat from among the nominated seats was reserved for women which resulted in the nomination of Lalziki Sailo in the first term of the Mizo District Council. She was a popular figure not only among the womenfolk but also among the Mizo community as she was brought up by the British missionaries and received good education and she even had programmes in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). She was popular among the officials for her fluency in English.<sup>15</sup> However, not much is known about her achievement or contribution as a member of the legislature during her term as a member of the District Council.

In the second term of the Mizo District Council, a lady named Hmingliani, the then President of the Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual (women organisation), was appointed for the nominated seat. She was the wife of Thanhkira, one of the most popular figures among the Mizo and during her tenure as a member of the Mizo District Council, she had made an enormous contribution in the modification of the Mizo Customary Law through legislation. According to the modification, Mizo women were allowed to inherit property in the presence of a Will if properly executed with witnesses. However, at the time of enforcement, problems cropped up and the Council even

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p.31

thought of reversing its decision in the modification of the Customary Law. But due to the presence of Hmingliani with her concerted effort, no reversion was made and women had the right to inherit property. This was a very great achievement made by her as a member of the legislature.

Culture affects women's political behavior to a great extent that it may deprive them of their self-esteem which is necessary for political leadership.<sup>16</sup> In a culture which values the male more highly than the female, women may never have the chance to acquire the confidence and autonomy required to seek power and wield it effectively.<sup>17</sup> This has been truly reflected in the Mizo society as majority of the women has acquired a mindset which regards themselves to be inferior being, not being able to do well what the men can do. At the same time, the men in the society also frequently points out that they were not giving permission to their wives to take part in politics.

R.Lalfakawma has pointed out in his article '*Hmeichhe finin tuikhur ral a kailo*' (A women's wit does not reach the other side of the pond) has written that he agreed with a comment of an old school teacher who stated that for a public leader, an ordinary man is better than a capable woman.<sup>18</sup> This was meant to denote how women are to be engaged with housekeeping and looking after their children, but at the same time it shows the discriminating attitude of the Mizo men. The writer further commented with regard to reservation of seats in the local self-government, that as long as his wife did not become a member of the village council, he hoped for

---

<sup>16</sup> Niroj Sinha, *Patriarchy, Politics and Women* in Niroj Sinha(Ed) *Women and Indian Politics*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, p.49

<sup>17</sup> Ibid,p.49

<sup>18</sup>Vanglaini newspaper, 10<sup>th</sup> December, Aizawl, 2014

the best. Another article ‘Ka nupui chu a VC lovang’ ( My wife will not become a village council member) written by C.Lalromawia also stated that the writer would never allow his wife to become a member of the local self-government due to the fact that she will have to travel with other male members on several occasions in accordance with the call for duty as he is completely against it.<sup>19</sup> These two articles show the mentality of the Mizo men particularly of the rural areas.

Table 6.0 Approval of Political career for women

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	66	84.61	83	81.37	16	80
b)No	12	15.38	19	18.62	4	20
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017- August 2018

As given in Table 6.0, the respondents were asked about their opinions on the participation of women in politics. The urban women respondents were more positive about political participation of women with 84.61 % supporting it while it is 81.37 % among the rural women respondents. As a whole, women from both the areas supported women’s political participation. The male respondents also approve of political career for women with 80 % of them giving their support but majority of the supporters are unmarried. Once the respondents get married, there is the chance of the changing of their opinion on political participation of women. The married

<sup>19</sup>Vanglaini newspaper, 23<sup>rd</sup>& 24<sup>th</sup> November, Aizawl, 2014

men are mostly against it which is an issue that has to be reckoned with and related with male attitude.

Table 6.1 Reasons for Approval

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a) Equally capable as men in politics	15	22.72	18	21.68	7	43.35
b) May cleanse politics	10	15.5	9	10.84	-	-
c) Improve their life condition	41	62.12	56	67.4	9	56.25
Total	66	100	83	100	16	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

The reason given by 62.12 % for the approval of political career for women among the urban respondents is mainly with the hope that it would improve the life condition of women, while 22.72 % thinks that women were equally capable as men and 15.5 % hope that involvement of more women may cleanse politics. Among the rural women, 67.4 % support it for the reason of uplifting the life condition of women, 21.28 % support political career for women as women are equally capable as men while another 10.84 % support it for cleaning politics. Among the male respondents, 43.35 % supports women's involvement in politics as they are equally capable as men while another 56.25 % hope that it would bring improvement in the living condition of women.

Table 6.1.1 Reasons for disapproval

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Creates tension in the family	8	66.6	10	52.6	2	50
b)Damages their image	2	16.66	3	15.78		
c)Lack of temperament and physical ability	2	16.66	6	31.57	2	50
Total	12	100	19	100	4	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Among the few respondents who disapprove of political career for women, 66.6 % of the urban women, 52.6 % of the rural women and 50 % of the male respondents disapproves it for the reason that it creates tension in the family. Another 50 % of the male opposers opined that women are not strong enough to get involved in politics.

Table 6.2 Success of Women Political Leaders

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	58	74.35	70	68.62	8	40
b) No	18	23.07	27	26.47	12	60
c) NA	2	2.56	5	4.9	-	-
Total	78	100	102	100	20	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

Questioning on the success capability of women as political leaders, 74.35 % of the urban women respondents, 68.62 % of rural women and 40% of men think that women were capable of being successful leaders in politics. This clearly shows the differences in the attitude of men and women towards leadership.

Table 6.2.1 Reason for Success of Women

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Equal footing with men	11	18.96	12	17.1	2	25
b)Constitution guarantees equal political rights	34	58.62	49	70	4	50
c)Achievement in political field itself	13	22.41	9	12.8	2	25
Total	58	100	70	100	8	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017-August 2018

When asked about their opinion on the success capability of women as political leaders, 74.35 % of the urban women were positive while it is 68.62 for the rural women respondents. The reason given for women’s success in political career has been mainly because of the fact that our Constitution guarantees equal political rights to men and women.

Table 6.2.2

Reason for ill-success of women

Answer	Urban Respondents	Percent	Rural Respondents	Percent	Male Respondents	Percent
a)Lack of social interaction	8	44.4	10	37.03	3	25
b)Damaging to image and character	3	16.6	6	22.2	3	25
c)Criminalization of politics	7	38.8	11	40.74	6	50
Total	18	100	27	100	12	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017- August 2018

At the same time, most of the reasons given for the ill-success of women in politics are lack of socialization and the criminalization of politics. Most of the male respondents, i.e 80 % of them approve of political career for women but at the same time, only 40 % of them think that women would be successful in their political career.

Lalhlmpuii<sup>20</sup>, former Minister-of-state in the 1<sup>st</sup> Mizoram State Legislative Assembly under the Mizo National Front ministry of 1987, stated that she had entered politics due to invitation from the MNF party. She joined the party right after the Peace Accord was signed between the Government of India and the MNF on 30<sup>th</sup> June,1986. She was teaching in Pachhunga College during that time as a Lecturer in the Department of Geography. Her father-in-law is Zamanthanga, one of the most important leaders of the MNF, as such one can say that she had political ties from her

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview held on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 at her residence



family. She eventually became the President of the Mizo National Women Front, a women's wing of the MNF party and remained in the office till 2004. After the Memorandum of Settlement was signed in 1986, in accordance with the MOU, the Union Territory of Mizoram became a full-fledged state and the first election to the Mizoram state Assembly was held on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1987 in which the MNF party came to power. Lalhlimpuii was a contestant from Aizawl North I constituency and was elected.

When the government was formed, she was inducted to become the first Mizo woman to become a minister. She was given the portfolios of Social Welfare Department and Labour and Employment Department where she had performed her responsibility with excellence. Unfortunately for the MNF government, the legislature was dissolved after functioning for only one year due to dissension among the members of the legislature over Laldenga's leadership. Lalhlimpuii had contested in the Assembly elections again in 1989, 1993 and 1998 but unfortunately lost in all the elections. During the short term of her ministership, she had made many achievements like establishment of the Old-age Home at Durtlang, establishment of Women Development Corporation by meeting the Central Minister PV Narasimha Rao under Rajiv Gandhi's government. Under her ministership, the Labour and Employment Department was planned to be computerised but because of the fall of the MNF government, it could not be accomplished. She had worked for the improvement of the welfare of the Mizo women and became the Chairperson of the Mizoram Women Commission from 2007 and remained in the office for two terms.

At present, she is the Advisor of the MNWF and is also a National Executive Member of her party.

The Congress woman, Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu<sup>21</sup>, who was elected in the bye election of the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly elections, said that she entered into politics because of the influence she got from her father, C.Chawngkunga, veteran politician of the Congress party. Since her childhood, she saw the visitors of her father in their house all the time. This sowed in her a sense of pity especially for the poor people from the rural villages and instigated in her a desire to help them. After she completed her studies, due to her deep interest in politics, she entered into politics as was expected and followed by an invitation from the Block President of her area of residence. She then became the Joint Secretary of the block level youth committee of the Congress party. Later on she was elected to become the President of the Mizoram Pradesh Youth Congress Committee in 2012. She also admitted that she was what she was then partly due to the fact that she was her father's daughter, her father being a veteran Congress party leader in the state. According to her opinion, there is less presence of women in Mizoram politics because of the existence of patriarchal society where there exists a general feeling that politics was a game played by men-folks alone. The women, in general, are of the opinion that politics was something that women should not get involved. In addition to the lack of confidence of the Mizo women in entering the political field, they had been most of the time unaccepted by the party workers at the different levels of the political echelons.

---

<sup>21</sup> Personal interview held on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 at her residence

Sangnawni<sup>22</sup>, the one and only elected member of Lai Autonomous District Council, also stated that she entered into politics by helping her friends and relatives during election campaigns of the Council. She is a middle-aged, married woman who began to develop real interest in politics while campaigning for others. Later, she became more and more interested in politics which made her decide to finally to seek candidacy from her party for the Lai Autonomous District Council elections in 2010. She felt that she was able to provide real help to the needy only after entering into politics. She mentioned that it was still odd for a woman to contest in the area even in this modern age. At the time of her first candidacy, she was neither a member of the Mahila Congress nor a member of the village council but just an active member of her party. For this reason, she was even discouraged to stand in the elections by her male colleagues. She was not disheartened even when she lost in the elections and continues to work whole-heartedly by helping anyone in need from the area she contested. This rightfully led her to her success in the LADC General elections in 2015. She was appointed as Chairman of the Town Committee and has been performing her duty till date.

She has been trying her best for the development of her area and admits that she would continue with her political career if possible in order to be able to contribute for the welfare of people, upliftment of the status of women in particular. She feels that if there were more women in the decision-making positions, politics will become cleaner.

---

<sup>22</sup> Telephone interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2019

Lalhmingmawii<sup>23</sup>, a member of the Bawngkawn South Local Council, stated that she had always been interested in politics and used to be a committee member at the unit level and had also been an Office Bearer in the youth organization of the party to which she belonged. She cited that she had faced no difficulties or problems either from her family or from any other bodies. She also said that she wanted to contest again in the next election as she found great interest in working for her locality. She further commented that reservation of seats for women was very essential as it was mostly through this only that more women can become members of the local self-governments. Constituting half of the local population, women in the areas need someone belonging to the same gender to share their problems and help them in resolving them through an able body.

Lalsiamliani<sup>24</sup>, another member of the Bawngkawn South Local Council, also expressed that she had always been interested in politics and that it might have been the influence she got from her father who was a former Village Council President in their locality. She became the secretary of her party's women's wing, i.e. Congress Mahila till the time she got married. Even after her marriage, she continued to be an office bearer of her party's women's wing and remained in office till the time she got elected in the Local Council. She further says that she would be contesting again in the next election but also depend upon the decision of her family. According to her opinion, the reason for the minimal presence of women in politics is partly the fault of the Mizo women as they conceived themselves as having lower status to men, the women also do not promote one another to challenge the men-folks so as to occupy

---

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview held on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 at her shop

<sup>24</sup> Personal interview held at her residence on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2018

positions of importance in the political process. The Mizo society, as it is, is a patriarchal society where the authority resides with the men in the society at all levels. Lalsiamliani took part in all the functioning of the local council, in the exercising of the Council's powers and functions and participate actively in the various deliberations of the Council's meetings. She elaborated that there was lack of coordination between the women's organisation in her locality and the women local council members due to fact that the leader of the organisation belongs to a different political party thus having a negative effect on the smooth working between the two bodies for the upliftment of women.

Teresa Rothangpuii<sup>25</sup>, a very popular leader of YMA, Sairang branch, who had also been a member of village council in Sairang, in her autobiography stated the problems and hardships that she had faced in her life especially in the political arena. She had been elected as member of village council in 2002 and was appointed as treasurer during her term from 2002 upto 2005. During this time, policy of seat reservation was not yet implemented in Mizoram and the elected women members had won their membership from general seats. Along with her male colleagues, she was able to fulfill the task that lay before her during her tenure. During her term in the village council, village council centenary was celebrated in the whole state of Mizoram and Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had come for the celebrations whereby the village council members of Sairang had the opportunity to meet him and requested for the utilisation of Balu (sand) along the bank of Tlawng river according to the wishes of the villagers which has been implemented till today. She belonged to the INC party but when she decided to contest in the 2009 village council election from

---

<sup>25</sup> Teresa Rothangpuii , *Ka Chan Tawka Khawrel*, Self Published, Aizawl, 2017

the same locality, she was not given a ticket by her party and hence decided to contest as independent candidate in order to have the chance to serve the public again. Just before the election, she was given orders from the party leaders to withdraw her candidature due to opposition that she faced from her rival candidate. She was summoned to the party office and was forced to withdraw her nomination by the leaders of her own party in which she had no other option but to reconcile to their wishes.<sup>26</sup>

All the Mizo women politicians who had stood in the various state Assembly elections in the past years felt that the Mizo people, in general, are not in favour of women standing in the elections. They usually do not give their votes to them. The women politicians face more hardships from their fellow party-men whenever they are given party tickets to stand in the elections. In an interview conducted by The Frontier Despatch magazine,<sup>27</sup> all of them agree that they had been elected only because of the influence of their party during the different eras. K.Thansiami admitted that she had been elected in the 1984 Assembly elections only because of the People's Conference party's great influence over the Mizo people during that time. She said that the toughest part in standing for the elections was during the time of allotment of party tickets as there were many prominent party-men who aspired for seats in the elections.

Lalhlimpuii also reveals that she was elected in the Assembly elections of 1987 only because the Mizo people at that time wanted the MNF party to rule the state. The reason being of peace that flourished after many years of disturbance in the area. She

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, p.141

<sup>27</sup>The Frontier Despatch, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, p.6

also says that at the time when she was given party ticket to stand in the election, there were many party-men who were against a woman contesting in the election and that the dissenters were persuaded to accept her after enormous efforts from her supporters from within the party.

Lalmalsawmi<sup>28</sup>, a graduate, married with four children and a former Aizawl Municipal Councilor, who contested in the 2013 Assembly elections from MNF ticket admitted that Mizo people do not accept women in the field of politics and that she could not get support from her fellow party-men in the election campaigns for quite a considerable time.

All the women candidates who have contested in the elections experienced opposition from their own fellow party-men in addition to being attacked for being a woman from their opponents. They felt that the Mizo society is now starting to accept women even in the field of politics but the main struggle is from within the male aspiring leaders of the political parties which can be found in all parties. Another female politician from the Congress party who had contested twice in Congress party ticket revealed that it was tough to be a woman in the field of politics. She also said that she faced more opposition from within the party than from her opponent candidates during her times.

A profound member of the Indian National Congress, Engmawii<sup>29</sup>, who is a married woman with one grown up girl child, is an uneducated woman and has been elected for various posts within the party as well as in the local government. She admits that

---

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview at her residence on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Personal interview at her residence on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

she has never played a part in the women's wing of the INC party which is known as Mahila Congress. She had been elected in the village council for four consecutive terms and had even served as the president of the village council. She started her political career from the bottom of the party's hierarchical organisation i.e unit and had climbed up reaching the state level by being elected as an executive member of the Mizoram Pradesh Congress. She was elected as the party's unit president for five terms and then elected to become a member of the Aizawl District Congress Committee. Then, she has been elected as the party's Block president for four terms, one term consisting of two years. Regarding her political career, she expressed that she entered politics with a major aim of helping the poor and the needy. She further stated that during her terms working as village council member and as a block president, she had always handed over funds, financial assistance and other benefits within her concerned area to the poor and needy who are usually women especially widows.

Another woman leader of the Indian National Congress, Zolawmi<sup>30</sup>, the elected secretary in-charge of GAD within the party, is a very active and able leader who has always given support to her party even in its worst times as an opposition party. According to her, women members of the party are active most of the times and sub-headquarters of the party has been established in all the district headquarters of the eight districts in the state where the women folks play important roles.

---

<sup>30</sup> Personal interview at the INC office on 19/11/2018



A lady by the name of Rengpuii<sup>31</sup>, the President of the women's wing of the Mizo National Front party which is named Mizo National Women Front, is also a woman who has climbed up the party ladder through hard-work alone. She is a single mother with one married daughter and her educational qualification is twelve passed. She started her political career from the lowest body of party which is unit, without any prominent relative in the party, she managed to become the president. She had always supported women's political participation and disregard of her party affiliation; she attended the swearing in ceremony of Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu when she became a Minister-of-State. Rengpuii admits that she had faced some problems for being a woman party worker as she has often been judged and commented upon to look after her household rather than attend the party office. She also mentioned that women who were involved in politics are sometimes disregarded as women of loose character. She further elaborated that women party workers were usually simple women who are not even educated and below the intellectual circle and hopes that well educated women will join politics in the near future. She has been elected to the post of the president of the MNWF only for about a year but had greatly contributed for the party by travelling through the length and breadth of Mizoram and set up MNF women's unit in different parts of the state. By the time she took hold of her position, there were only seventy-three units but after holding her office for about a year, the number of units was already increased to six hundred which denotes her enormous contribution to the strength of the MNF party. During her tenure as president of the MNWF, women who had fought for independence during the time of the struggle of the Mizo National Front during the struggle for

---

<sup>31</sup> Personal interview at the MNF office, Hnam Run on 19/11/2018

independence of Mizoram were honoured which amounted to ninety-four women from Aizawl District, twenty-six from Kolasib district, nineteen from Mamit District, twelve from Serchhip District, twenty from Lawngtlai and five women from Siaha District. Twelve women from Champhai District are left to be honoured at the earliest and a girl child who has passed her matriculation from a wheelchair was also honoured by the MNWF. Thus, it can be clearly seen that Rengpuii, a leader of the MNF party has played a very important role for upliftment of Mizo women in general and for the advancement of her party i.e the Mizo National Front.

#### PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN CANDIDATES IN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The women candidates who contested in the different Assembly Elections held in Mizoram are forty-one in number, among these women only four of them had been elected, only one woman was elected twice while all the others managed to get elected only once. Thus, the percentage of women elected to the number of women contestants is only 9.75 % which is a low rate of success. The performance of the women contestants have been analysed from the tables given below:

Table 6.3 Women Candidates and their Performance

Year	Name	Party	Constituency	% of Vote secured	Status
1978	Thanmawii	PC	Serchhip	41.20	Elected
1979	Vanthangi	Ind	Lungpho	0.93	Forfeited
1979	Thanmawii	PC	Aizawl East	34.63	Elected
1979	Sanglianchhungi	Ind	Aizawl West	2.61	Forfeited
1984	K Thansiami	PC	Aizawl west	37.69	Elected

Source : Mizoram Election Results and Statistics by K.C Lalthansanga

During the period of Union Territory, three women contested in two elections out of the four elections that had taken place and from which only one contestant, Thanmawii who belonged to the People's Conference party was elected in the two elections contested by her while the other two women forfeited their security deposits.

Table 6.4

Women Candidates and their Performance (continuation)

Year	Name	Party	Constituency	% of vote secured	Status
1987	Lahlimpuii	MNF	Aizawl North I	38.06	Elected
	K.Thansiarni	PC	Aizawl West II	28.25	Not elected
	Rualchhingi	INC	Aizawl West II	22.64	Not elected
	B.Zodinpuui	Ind	Aizawl South I	5.73	Forfeited
1989	PC Sihmingthangi		Sangau	2.23	Forfeited
	Lahlimpuii	MNF	Aizawl North I	31.39	Not elected
	K.Thansiarni	PC	Aizawl North I	27.24	Not elected
	Chhingpuui	PC	Aizawl East II	25.85	Not elected

Source : Mizoram Election Results and Statistics by K.C Lalthansanga

In the Assembly elections of 1984, there was only one women candidate among the 133 candidates and she came out victorious against her male rivals by securing 37.69 percent of votes. After Mizoram became a state under the Indian Union, the members of the legislature was increased to forty from the thirty elected seats. In the first Mizoram State Assembly elections, among the four women contestants, only

Lalhlimpuii of the MNF party won a seat by capturing 38.06 percent of votes while another woman forfeited her deposit. In the following election held in 1989, eventhough there were four women in the election fray, none of them could capture a seat and one woman forfeited her election deposit. The other three candidates fared quite well but ultimately lost to their prominent male rivals.

Table 6.5

Women Candidates and their Performance (continuation)

Year	Name	Party	Constituency	% of vote Secured	Status
1991(Bye election)	Lalbiakdiki	MNF	Aizawl South II	43.7	Not Elected
1993	SD Talukdar	BJP	Tlabung	16.21	Not Elected
	Lalthlamuani	MJD	Phuldungsei	16.51	Not Elected
	Lalhlimpuii	MNF	Aizawl North I	46.94	Not Elected
1998	C.Vanlalruati	Independent	Tlabung	7.50	Forfeited
	ST Chakma	SAP	Tlabung	3.80	Forfeited
	H.Zatluangi	MNF(N)	Vanva	11.38	Not Elected
	Lalthanzami	Independent	Serchhip	0.15	Forfeited
	PC Thachhungi	LS	Tlungvel	1.82	Forfeited

	Lalrinmawii	BJP	Aizawl North I	1.80	Forfeited
	K Thansiami	JD	Aizawl North I	0.51	Forfeited
	Lalhmingmawii	BJP	Aizawl East I	0.38	Forfeited
	Lalkhumi	JD	Aizawl South I	0.15	Forfeited
	J Rothangpuii	RJD	Serchhip	0.70	Forfeited
2003	Lalramengmawii	JDU	Sangau	0.33	Forfeited
	F Lallawmzuali	ZNP	Lunglei South	14.24	Not Elected
	Buangthangpuii	JDU	Ngopa	1.22	Forfeited
	Zothankimi	INC	Bilkhawthlir	27.51	Not Elected
	Hmingthanzami	ZNP	Kawrthah	16.39	Not Elected
	Ngurbiaki	JDU	Aizawl North II	0.08	Forfeited
	K Zodingliani	EU	Aizawl South I	0.48	Forfeited
2008	Ramfangzauvi	BJP	Kolasib	0.94	Forfeited
	R Lalrinawmi	LJP	Kolasib	0.68	Forfeited
	Vanlahmingchhuangi	LB	Chalfilh	0.45	Forfeited
	Lalnunziri	BJP	Aizawl North II	0.61	Forfeited
	Zothankimi	INC	Aizawl West II	32.97	Not Elected
	H Lalhmingthangi	ZNP	Champhai South	17.50	Not Elected

	Laldinkimi	Independent	East Tuipui	1.91	Forfeited
	Lalhlimpuii	MNF	Hrangturzo	27.49	Not Elected
	Lalthuammawii	LJP	Lunglei South	0.45	Forfeited
2013	Ramfangzauvi	BJP	Kolasib	1.0	Forfeited
	Lalmalsawmi	MNF	Tawi	37.95	Not Elected
	C Lalnunziri	BJP	Aizawl North II	0.74	Forfeited
	Tlangthanmawii	INC	Aizawl West I	33.96	Not Elected
	Zoramchhani	BJP	Lengteng	0.60	Forfeited
	B Sangkhumi	Independent	Champhai South	11.01	Not Elected
2014(Bye Election)	Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu	INC	Hrangturzo	60.6	Elected

Source : Mizoram Election Results and Statistics by K.C Lalthansanga

Analysis of the above table reveals that women contestants have been present in all the assembly Elections that have been held in Mizoram but only very few women candidates had been successful. Not only the women candidates lost in the elections but most of them forfeited their election deposits in the elections which proved that Mizo women's position in the field of politics is almost nil. This fact can be clearly seen from the table which revealed that the percentage of women candidates in comparison with male is very minimal and it had been the highest in the Legislative Assembly Elections of 2008 which was only 3.88 %. The recent elections of 2018

had the highest number of women contestants with 7.17 % but none of them were elected.

Table 6.6 Women Candidature Percentage

Year	Total no. of Candidates	No. of Female Candidates	Percentage of Women from total Candidates	No. of Elected Women
1972	154	4	2.60%	Nil
1978	154	1	0.65%	1
1979	149	3	2.01%	1
1984	133	1	0.75%	1
1987	143	4	2.80%	1
1989	161	3	1.86%	Nil
1993	121	2	1.65%	-do-
1998	221	8	3.61%	-do-
2003	192	6	3.13%	-do-
2008	206	8	3.88%	-do-
2013	142	6	4.23%	-do-
2018	194	15	7.17%	-do-

Source : I&PR : Mizoram as given in H.C Lalchhuanawma, Mizo Hmeichhiate Leh Ram

Rorelna article

The practice of proxy women is not true with women leaders who are recruited from the white collar background since they are educated and know about the working of

the official system, they will not remain silent in the Panchayat meetings.<sup>32</sup> Women not only take up issues relating to basic needs such as drinking water, availability of doctors and teachers in the villages which are dear to them, but also general developmental activities.<sup>33</sup>

## PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS

Looking at the different states in India, the participation of women legislators in assembly proceedings, as it appears, is not so much determined by the gender factor as it is by their numbers. Both the men and women legislators of the state assemblies are governed by certain sets of rules and procedures. However, even though they are given equal opportunities as men, due to their small numerical strength, women are in a disadvantaged position. Therefore, their participation appears to be low. In the assembly, women legislators usually cut across party lines and are mostly united on issues relating to violence and atrocities committed against women in different parts of the country. On other general issues, they often toe the party line and made their speeches according to the principles of their parties. Women members are also given chances, along with their male colleagues to speak on a variety of issues, determined by their respective parties depending upon their interest and specialisation. They do raise other issues affecting the whole country or the whole state apart from women-specific problems. The incidence and frequency of raising issues, moving resolutions and initiating discussions is, however, linked both to the experience of the woman member in terms of time and exposure to political activities at the grass roots level.

---

<sup>32</sup> Ram Prakash Ratna, *73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution and Women's Empowerment* in Archana Kumar and RK Verma (Eds.) *Women Political Leadership in India Some Important Dimensions*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2010, p.113

<sup>33</sup>Ibid



The performance of women legislators over the years shows that despite the disadvantage of inadequate numerical strength, women legislators have discharged their responsibilities as representative of the people with much commitment and dedication as their male colleagues, sometimes even much more. They concerned themselves not only with issues affecting women but also on other issues concerning the state and the general public as a whole as mentioned above.

On the eve of Indian independence, the Lushai Hills was visited by the Bardoloi Committee to consider what kind of status was to be given to the area after India got independence. To meet this Committee, the District Conference appointed six member committee in which Lalziki Sailo, a female was one of the members.<sup>34</sup> Presence of Mizo women in the politics of Mizoram may be said to be in the 'Advisory Council' which looked after the welfare of the Mizo people before the formation of the District Council in the Lushai Hills. Two seats were reserved for women in the Council, one seat each from Aizawl town and Lunglei town which may be said to be a result of the pressure made by the Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual, the first ever women organisation in the history of Mizoram. Lalsangpuii was elected from Aizawl town under much controversy regarding the candidacy and Remthangi was elected from Lunglei town.

After the formation of the District Council, one seat from among the nominated seats was reserved for women which resulted in the nomination of Lalziki Sailo in the first term of the Mizo District Council. She was a popular figure not only among the womenfolk but also among the Mizo community as she was brought up by the

---

<sup>34</sup>Sangkima, Women and Politics in Mizoram Through The Ages, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol.III, Issue.I, Mizo History Association, July, 2002, p.27

British missionaries and received good education and she even had programmes in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). She was popular among the officials for her fluency in English.<sup>35</sup> However, not much is known about her achievement as a member of the legislature during her term as a member of the District Council.

In the second term of the Mizo District Council, a lady named Hmingliani, the then President of the Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual (women organisation), was appointed for the nominated seat. She was the wife of Thanhlira, one of the most popular figures among the Mizo and during her tenure as a member of the Mizo District Council, she had made an enormous contribution in the modification of the Mizo Customary Law through legislation. According to the modification, Mizo women were allowed to inherit property in the presence of a Will if properly executed with witnesses. However, at the time of enforcement, problems began to crop up and the Council even thought of reversing its decision in the modification of the Customary Law, but due to the presence of Hmingliani with her concerted effort, no reversion was made and women had the right to inherit property. This was a very great achievement made by her as a member of the legislature. As a result, a very important Bill concerning the affairs of the Mizo women, The Mizo District (Inheritance of Property) Act, 1956, was passed which enabled the Mizo women to inherit property in the presence of a written will. This right to inherit property had never been enjoyed by the Mizo women in the past as all property were always in the hands of the male members, be it the father, brother, husband or son but never in that of the mother, sister, wife or daughter.

---

<sup>35</sup>Ibid, p.31

Thus, Mizoram functioned as an Autonomous district Council in the name of Mizo District Council for twenty years from 1952 to 1972 and was only one of the districts of Assam. During its functioning as a District Council, there were four elections whereby no women contested in them but two women, Lalziki Sailo and Maria Hmingliani were given the nominated seats in the first and second Mizo District Council consecutively to represent the Mizo women. The representation was a result of the great effort taken by the women organisation functioning at the time named Tangrual Pawl. However, no woman was nominated in the third and fourth term and thus, no role was played by the women members.

During the period of Union Territory status of Mizoram, women had bolder appearance as well as stronger participation in politics by not only becoming members of political parties but also by contesting in the Assembly elections. Mizoram had thirty-three members in the Legislative Assembly with thirty elected and three nominated seats. From the first election held in 1972, unlike the District council elections, four women contested but unfortunately, all of them forfeited their security deposits. However, this failure did not deter the women and moreover, Saptawni was appointed for one of the nominated seats. During her term, eventhough it is not political contribution as such, mention may be made that she had started a convention of reading the Bible at the beginning of each session which has been continued till today.

There was only one woman candidate in the second Assembly elections, Thanmawii from People's Conference and she won her contested seat which made her the first elected woman member of the Assembly. Unfortunately, due to dissension amongst

the members, the House had to be dissolved after functioning for only a little more than one year and none of the members, including the lady-member could perform much of their duties. Fresh election of the Assembly was held in 1979 where there were three women candidates. For the second time, Thanmawii again captured a seat and another lady, Thansiami was appointed in the nominated seat making the presence of two women in the House for the first time in Mizoram history. The two women members played active roles during their term which could be seen clearly from their performance inside the House. Thanmawii was the Speaker Protem on the first sitting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mizoram Legislative Assembly and all the other members of the House took their oath before her chair as appointed by the Lt.Governor, NP Mathur, on 25<sup>th</sup> May,1979. She conducted the election of the Speaker, and then declared Dr. Kenneth Chawngliana as the Speaker with no other nominations on the floor. She also informed the House in the later sessions that the then government had received instructions from the Government of India regarding the setting up of Women Development Corporation and the Government also intended to take steps accordingly. She also once mentioned about immoral trafficking in women and informed the House that two institutions, reception Centre and Protective Home were proposed to be established and which were established later on. Looking at her performance inside the House, one can easily realise that Thanmawii was a great legislator. She had raised queries on many issues and voiced her opinions in the House and she has been the only woman capable of being elected twice in the Assembly Elections till date.

In the 1984 Assembly Elections, there was only one woman candidate, K.Thansiami and was elected by capturing 37.69 % of the total votes from her Constituency i.e Aizawl West. From being a nominated member in the previous term, she was able to get herself elected in the following Assembly elections. During her two terms in the legislature, once as a nominated member and the other as an elected member, K.Thansiami had also contributed great ideas and suggestions for the government. Realising the importance of attracting tourists to Mizoram as an important source of economy for the state, she had suggested setting up of Botanical Gardens with orchids and other types of plants worth preserving. She had also requested the state government for the construction of Health Sub-Centre in her Constituency which was looked into by the government.

After statehood, the first Legislative Assembly elections was held in 1987 in which one woman, Lalhlimpuii was elected from the MNF party. Under the MNF government she became a Minister-of-State and held the portfolios of Labour and Employment Department and Social Welfare department and had done her utmost for the upliftment of women. She brought to the notice of the House the plight of the Mizo women when they are divorced by their husbands who had to leave their house empty-handed with no share in their own households. She pointed out the insecurity of Mizo women which made them unable to attain positions which they could have attained otherwise. During her short term as Minister i/c Social Welfare Department, she informed the House that a Remand Home for misfortune girls under the age of 18 years had been established in Aizawl and that proposals were made for establishing hem in Lunglei and Chhimtuipui District. She also mentioned that a socio-economic

programme for looking after poor, distressed and divorced women and their children has been initiated by the Government. Nutrition was also provided for children by making use of locally produced food crops. She also announced in the House that Women's Hostel was constructed in Industrial Training Institute in regard to Labour and Employment Department. During her ministership, wages of different categories of labourers had also been determined. Besides these, she also said that Labour Cell had been established in the Employment Exchange under the supervision of Labour Officer and staff.<sup>36</sup>

For more than two decades, women remained absent in the legislature after the MNF government with Lalhlimpuii. In 2014, Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu was elected in a bye election held in Hrangturzo constituency vacated by the Chief Minister, Lalthanhawla. In 2017, she was appointed as a minister-of-state in charge of Departments of Sericulture, Cooperation and Fisheries. Credit may be given to her for the passage of *The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Bill, 2014* and *The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Amendment Bills, 2014* tabled by the concerned Minister and was passed by the Congress government after her presence in the House. The Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Amendment Bill, 2014 included besides fixing the number of Village Councils according to the number of households and elongating the term of the Village councils, also included the two-thirds reservation of seats for women in the Village Councils. She had even moved a motion of thanks to the Governor's speech on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 praising the Congress government for considering the plight of Mizo Women and for taking concrete steps for uplifting their status regarding marriage and divorce. She

---

<sup>36</sup>Session Proceedings of Mizoram Legislative Assembly

supported the bill and tried her best to persuade her fellow members to support and pass the Bill by stressing in the House that the Mizo women's condition in the society is not satisfactory and have often been compelled to file for divorce on the basis of *Sumchhuah*. Bill for reservation of seats for women in the local governments was also passed by the Congress government which was a great step for enhancing the position and participation of Mizo women in politics. The Bill for reservation of one-third of seats for women in the local governments was greatly supported by Ms. Vanlalawmpuii during the discussion time. In support of reservation of seats for women in local governments, she requested other members to support the bill which is concerned about women's welfare as it will be a good training ground for the women to contest in the Assembly elections as well. She invited her male colleagues to support the Bill stressing that there are many capable women who are fit to run the local self-governing bodies. She also pointed out the difficulties faced by women in politics by revealing how she herself was rejected by her fellow male members within the party. Vanlalawmpuii, being a member of the legislature has been a member of different committees of the House like Estimates Committee, Committee on Local Fund Accounts, Committee on Paper Laid on the Table, in which she has been fulfilling her responsibilities and duties assigned to her. She was one of the three MLAs who had been ambushed on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 by the HPC(D) while performing their duty travelling in the northern part of the state, near a village called Tinghmun, to study those areas regarding the establishment and location of Health Sub-centers available for the people in the concerned areas. Three policemen died and two others were wounded in this tragic incident.

From the four women legislators who have been present in the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram, it is clearly visible that the Mizo women were very able legislators if given the opportunity to attain such positions. In the women legislators that Mizoram have experienced so far, however few in number, had been aware of various issues pertaining to the development works like power generation, health, women's welfare, water supply, labour and employment, wages in which they had tried their utmost in solving and improving them.

#### PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the whole state of Mizoram, there is only one Urban Local Body which functions in the state capital city, Aizawl. The Aizawl Municipal Council started functioning from 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2008 as per the bill passed by the legislature known as The Mizoram Municipalities Bill, 2007. After functioning for almost three years, the first election to the 19 members of AMC was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010. In accordance with the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of India, two-thirds of the seats were reserved for women, i.e 6 out of 19 seats. For the six reserved seats for women, there were 14 women contestants and the reserved wards were decided by drawing of lot. Details of the election are as shown in the table below:



Table 6.7 Women in the 1<sup>st</sup>Urban Local Body

Sl.No	Ward No.	Name of Candidates	Name of Party	Results
1	II	1. Hmingthanzami 2. C.Sangzuali 3. C.Lalnunziri	Zoram Nationalist Party Mizoram People's Conference Bharatiya Janata Party	Elected
2	IV	1. Lalmalsawmi 2. Lalzampuii	Mizo National Front Indian National Congress	Elected
3	VI	1. Zamanthangi 2. Biakhluni	Mizo National Front Indian National Congress	Elected
4	XI	1. Lalchhuanmawii 2. Helen Vanlalduhi 3. Hmingthankhumi	Zoram Nationalist Party Mizo National Front Independent	Elected
5	XII	1.Laldinsangi 2.Rohmingliani	Indian National Congress Mizo National Front	Elected
6	XVI	1.F.Lalhuthangi 2. Rita Lalnunsangi	Indian National Congress Mizo National Front	Elected

Source : State Election Commission

The second election to the Aizawl Municipal Council was held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. As done in the previous election, there was drawing of lot for the wards to be reserved for women. There were 18 candidates for the six reserved seats which is four more than the first election. The election details are given in the following table:

Table 6.8 Women in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Urban Local Body

Sl.No	Ward No.	Name of candidates	Name of Party	results
1	I	1.R.Zomuanpuii 2.M.S.Dawngkimi 3.C.Lalrinsangi	Indian National Congress Zoram Nationalist Party Mizo National Front	Elected
2	VII	1.K.Lalhmingliani 2.Julie Zothanpuii 3.Lalrinzuali	Indian National Congress Zoram Nationalist Party Mizo national Front	Elected
3	IX	1.B.Lalawmpuii 2.Lalchhuanawmi 3.Laldinpuii	Mizo National Front Bharatiya Janata Party Indian National Congress	Elected
4	XIII	1.Zonunsangi 2.Saithantluangi Zote 3.Lalthazuali	Indian National Congress Mizo National Front Zoram Nationalist Party	Elected
5	XV	1.Zodingpuii 2.C.Laltlanmawii 3.Lalvulliani	Indian national Congress Zoram Nationalist Party Mizo National Front	Elected
6	XVIII	1.M.Zohmingthangi 2.Christina S.Lalrinpuii 3.Vanlalrengpuii	Indian National Congress Bharatiya Janata Party Mizo National Front	Elected

Source : State Election Commission

R.Zomuanpuii<sup>37</sup> : A very young and vibrant woman councilor of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation from Ward No.I, is a forty-four year old widow with three adolescent children who gave up her business career to serve the people. She entered politics by campaigning for her uncle who was an ex-Speaker in the Mizoram Legislative Assembly and then Minister-in -charge of Higher and technical education Department in their second term. With the implementation of reservation of seats in the local government, she was invited to contest in the AMC election in Ward No. I from the Indian National Congress and was elected. Before entering into politics, she was a social activist who had worked for the upliftment of the Mizo women and held many important posts in a number of women's organisations functioning in the state like Young Women Christian Association, Women Welfare Forum in Mizoram, Panchayat Mahila Shakti Abhiyan and Women Federation in Mizoram. She felt that she had won in the AMC elections due to hard-work and hard-work alone had made her overcome innumerable obstacles that she faced from her opponents both from within and outside the party. She managed to solve many problems like anti-incumbency within her party and also disaster management and came out with great solidarity within her party. She has been trying her best to improve the welfare of Mizo women and firmly stood on her grounds while trying to achieve her goal in making Aizawl a safe city for women, she tries to make the public toilets within the city more women-friendly and also tries to provide good streetlighting facilities make it safe for women. She also plans to continue with her political career and will contest in the future elections if possible and will give her best for her motherland and for the women-folks so that the attitude of the general Mizo society would

---

<sup>37</sup> Personal interview at her residence on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

change in favour of women. She wants to erase the common saying of *Hmeichhia te te* which is an expression of disregarding women as inferior being. In support of seat reservation for women, she expresses that in the present situation of Mizoram, women needed reservation of seats to bring out hidden but talented political women so as to make them come out from their hideouts and with the passage of time, they will be able to participate even without reserved seats. Zomuanpuii further states that women in general should change their perspective and have broader outlook in changing their inferiority complex in the field of politics and for this awareness has to be generated among the women-folks.

Dingpuii<sup>38</sup>, another member of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation from Ward No.XV, is also a young married woman of only thirty-five years, who was elected to the AMC in 2015. She is well educated with MBA degree and is a business proprietor. She admits that she contested in the AMC election due to invitation from the Indian National Congress. She also says that she does not face any difficulty from any angle of her life and that she was supported by her family and also says that she was happy to be in a position to help the poor and the needy. During her term as a councilor, she has worked for the development of her ward in regard to construction of steps, retaining wall for preventing landslide, drains and for the development in sports by providing infrastructures needed by the youths. She feels that it was important for women to take part in the administration of the country as the feminine nature of women like compassion, understanding, sincerity and industriousness are very helpful in effective administration. With regard to reservation, Dingpuii supports seat reservation for women as it is still difficult for Mizo women to contest

---

<sup>38</sup> Interview through telephone on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

and win elections in the Mizo patriarchal society where women are not welcomed in the political sphere. She plans to continue her political career and if she is given an opportunity by her party, she will contest in the next election.

K.Lalhmingliani<sup>39</sup>, another AMC councilor from Ward No.VII is a 50 year old married lady with three children, her education is till matriculate and she is a housewife besides her political involvement. She entered into politics due to invitation from political parties, she had been invited by both the two major political parties functioning in Mizoram and she chose to join the Indian National Congress. She also expresses her gratitude in being able to help the needy, especially women and children who had seen hardships in life. Being an AMC councilor, she has worked hard for the development of Aizawl city, her ward area in particular, in relation to development funds received from the government for the maintenance of road, electricity and water supply. She also admits that people from her area were contented with her performance which proves to be true. With regard to reservation of seats for women, she supports reservation as the Mizo society still regards women as more incapable than men especially in the arena of politics. Church plays an important role in the status of the Mizo women, even if it does not openly proclaim the inferior position of women, this is revealed in the various administrative system of the Church, inclusive of all the different denominations.

---

<sup>39</sup> Interview through telephone on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

Table 6.9 Reason for contesting AMC/LC/VC elections

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percentage
a) Real interest in politics	27	38.03
b) Need to fill up reserved seats	44	61.97
c) Total	71	100

Source : Survey conducted between September 2017- August 2018

Among the two hundred samples collected for the research, 74 of the respondents i.e 37 % are members of the local self- governing bodies like the village councils and local councils functioning in the state and are asked various questions by the researcher through the questionnaire prepared for the purpose. First of all, they were asked if they contested the elections due to invitation or of their own accord, to this, 38.03 % of the members declared that they contested according to their own will while another 61.97 % replied that they contested due to reservation of seats in the local bodies. This implies that the Mizo women, even if they involved themselves in politics, are not participating due to their own interest but because of the necessity of the situation.

Table 6.9.1 Whether encountered difficulties while discharging functions

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	17	24.28
b)No	53	75.71
Total	70	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

Despite the fact that most of the women members contested the elections only because of necessity of circumstances, once they involved themselves with their duties, they face no difficulties in the discharge of their functions. 75.71 % of the respondents replied that they had no difficulty in making necessary decisions in connection with their works and only 24.28 % showed this difficulty with regard to their decision-making power.

Table 6.9.2 Mode of attending meetings and deliberations

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percent
a) Sit quietly	2	2.7
b) Voice opinion	72	97.29
Total	74	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

The respondents were also asked how they performed in the Council's deliberations, 97.29 % of the council members admits that they actively take part in the different meetings and deliberations occurring in the council's meetings. Only 2.7 % of the women members says that they use to sit quietly in the meetings without taking part in the discussions which shows that the women members in the local bodies are active members who are brave enough to voice their opinions in the discharge of their functions.

Table 6.9.3 Gain more confidence after getting elected

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percent
a)Yes	73	98.65
b)No	1	1.35
Total	74	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

The women members of the local government claim that they become more confident after they were elected as members of the councils. 98.65 % of them became more confident which denotes the fact that reservation of seats for women had become an important factor affecting the confidence-building of women especially in the political venue. This can be clearly seen from the above table where only 1.35 % does not gain more confidence from their membership.

Table 6.9.4

More responsibilities added besides duties as member of local government

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	70	94.59
b) No	4	5.41
Total	74	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

As per the Table - 6.9.4, 94.59 % of the women respondents stated that they had more responsibilities in the society besides their responsibilities as members of local government. This clearly denotes that once a woman entered the role of governance,



she would become more and more committed and has enormous capacity in the discharge of her responsibilities.

Table 6.9.5 Receive differential regards from others after getting elected

Answer	Number of Respondents	Percent
a) Yes	60	85.71
b) No	10	14.29
Total	70	100

Source : Survey conducted during September 2017-August 2018

As per the Table- 6.9.5, out of the 74 women members, 85.71 % of them further said that they were given more respect from the people in general which in turn boost up their confidence level and performance of their work.

#### CONCLUSION:

Leadership is a word having no gender inclination but at the same time, when it is applied in the field of politics, it somehow tends to lean towards the men. Looking at the global scenario, the percentage of women political leaders is very low. Political status of the Indian women is no better which seems to be much worse in the North-east India. On the other hand, a close examination of the women political leaders surely displays political skills and high degree of leadership quality which is shown in the discharging of their functions.

The Mizo women, in general, can be said to be very able in whatever fields they pursue, be it economic, social or political. At the same time, one finds least number of women in the field of politics, the reasons for which varies from the societal

system to the individual woman. There were two women legislators in the nominated seats during the period of Mizo District Council functioning for 20 years from 1952 upto 1972. During the period of functioning of Mizoram as Union Territory from 1972 till 1986, for a period of 14 years, there were three women legislators. From the year 1987 till the present, one find only two elected women legislators which depicts the minimal presence of women in Mizoram politics. However, few as the women leaders maybe, an analysis of their role-performance shows that they had been able leaders who are as capable as their male colleagues in the performance of their duties. One thing that almost all the women leaders in the legislature mentioned is the fact that they had gone through much hardship than the men especially from the time of selection of candidature till the time they got elected. But once they occupy their positions, they do not have much problem afterwards. Most of the women leaders are highly educated and come from affluent families and the reason for the lesser number of women in their opinion is generally because of the lack of women to women acceptance among the Mizo women themselves. Another reason which is mostly cited by the women leaders is the absence of a greater number of women who have real interest in politics to really climb up the political ladder by facing hardships and failures.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **CONCLUSION**

Political participation is an important determinant of the success of a democratic government. If the people of a country are apathetic and have no interest in the working and functioning of the government, it is a sign of inefficiency or even failure of the government. The more people participate, the more is the efficiency of the government which is an indication of the success of democratic system as a whole. At the same time, people's participation denotes a holistic participation which includes each and every section of the society. But, looking at the global scenario, one can easily observe that there are some sections of the society that have minimal representation in political structure. This applies to the position of women who consist of half of the world's population but are least represented in the decision-making body of the state. This is a common feature in the government of the different political systems of the world including India.

The level and extent of women's participation in the political process denotes the level of actual functioning of liberty and equality which are guaranteed to the people by the state. All the states today granted to their citizens liberty, equality, justice in the form of social, economic and political which are enshrined in their constitutions and this applies for India too. The Indian constitution has guaranteed liberty, equality and justice mentioned in various articles and thus provide equal opportunities in all spheres of life without any discrimination on the basis of religion, race, sex or birth. Irrespective of the protection of rights guaranteed in the constitution, it is a very sad reality that women are still facing discrimination in their lives especially in the

political fields. This is clearly revealed from the minimal number of women representatives in all the different levels of decision-making bodies in India. This applies from the two Houses of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, to different state legislatures and the local governments before the implementation of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Acts.

Indian political scenario also thus, reflects the unequal participation of its population based on gender. Political history of the country has revealed that it has been dominated by the Indian male population. Of all the presidents and prime ministers that we have had so far, there have been the presence of one woman each and the same applies for the vice-presidents too.

Participation of women in political activities were limited to certain types of activities, like the women organisations or in the lower levels of the party hierarchy. There are three major factors which accounted for this small number of women in public office like having children at home, women's perception of their role and of politics and fear of gender discrimination. It appears that odd working hours and spur of the moment activities are the aspects of public office, which discourage women from pursuing such activities. In addition, women are inhibited from running for public office because they feel it is not proper for women to do so and because others might disapprove of the same. Such activities run counter to their traditional role.

The study attempts to understand the extent of political participation of women in Mizoram, particularly in various elections that had been held in the past. It tries to find out the factors affecting them and analyse these factors which are responsible for the low level of participation of women especially in the higher level of political

participation. From the various data that had been collected by the researcher, it is observed that women in Mizoram participate very well in simple forms of political participation like voting in the elections, which is shown clearly in the percentage of voter turnout. The turnout percentage of women has even become higher than men in the recent past. But this higher percentage did not result in greater number of women getting elected.

In comparison with the period of functioning as a District Council, women were more participatory during the period of Union Territory. There were no elected women Member of District Council (MDC) except for a few nominated members and there were no women candidates in the Mizo District Council elections. Likewise, one finds more women in the political field after Mizoram became a state as compared to the time of Union Territory. There may be various reasons for the increase in participation of women which are what the present research has undertaken to find out. Different chapters of the thesis have dealt with the extent of women's participation in politics, factors effecting participation of women, particularly the church and civil society organisations, the similarities and differences of women living in the urban and rural areas and the role performance of the women leaders.

The Mizo patriarchal society needs to reconstruct the system of division of labour between men and women so that only the women were not stuck up with the household chores. This biased division is clearly revealed in the uneven distribution of household chores between men and women. The uneven distribution of family care responsibilities resulted in women spending more time at home as compared to

men. Thus, women have less time to attend to the different affairs outside the four walls of their house. Moreover, the study has also firmly indicated that men and women did not enjoy equal status in the Mizo society. Among the women respondents, 78 % from the urban areas and 70 % from the rural areas answered that women did not enjoy equal status with men, while 90 % of the male respondents also agree to it. This shows that despite the fact that the Indian constitution had granted equality of all without discrimination on the basis of sex, real equality does not exist in the society.

#### IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION

The study has also revealed that the more educated a woman is, the more she felt the need for women development and empowerment as was mentioned in the second hypothesis. It was found out that less educated women, below matriculation responded that there was not much need for women empowerment in political and religious field. While those women who are graduate and above expressed that the position and status of Mizo women needed improvement and development in all spheres of life especially in the political and religious sphere.

From the various studies conducted by the researcher, which include data, both primary as well as secondary, it can be concluded that the women political leaders, both at the state level and local level are very efficient and hard-working which proves the ability of women in holding decision-making positions. It has also been realised in the study that the women in the higher level of political positions like member of the State Legislature and the members of the Aizawl Municipal Corporation are mostly women who are highly educated. The women members of the

village Councils and the Local Councils are less educated but are very able members who play active role efficiently along with their male colleagues. They themselves admitted that they take active part in the deliberations of the Councils' meetings that were held in their localities. Among the 45 Village Council members who have been interviewed by the researcher, thirty of them are under-matriculate, ten are Class-X pass, one is Class-XII pass while another is a graduate, three of them are not available for comment. In the urban areas, there are 17 village council members and 26 local council members interviewed by the researcher. Among them, 13 are under-matriculate, 20 are Class-X pass, four are Class-XII pass and six graduates. Comparison of the two types of council members, those from the urban areas and those from the rural areas, revealed that the urban women who were involved in political process are more educated than those in the rural areas. In the lowest tier i.e the local council and the village councils, the highest qualification found among the members is graduate. But the members elected to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation have higher qualifications, except for a few members among the women, most of them are graduates and post graduates in different stream.

#### IMPACT OF CHURCH AND CSOs ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION

The research also reveals that Church and civil society organisations functioning in the state has a lot of impact upon the lives of the people, both positively as well as negatively. It has been realised from this research that eventhough majority of respondents of the questionnaire collected, say that the church does not have any role to play regarding the minimal presence of women in politics in Mizoram, the women leaders who have been interviewed by the researcher are of the opinion that church

and its system of patriarchal administration was responsible for the low presence of women in politics. Perhaps the women are subjugated in the church which can be seen clearly from the fact that most of the denominations of the church do not allow the ordination of women for ministers and church elders. The Baptist Church has given ordination to few women as elders and one for minister but without giving pastoral circle for administration. She had served as a faculty in the Bible College run by the Church till her retirement. The Salvation Army also appoints women as officers to conduct services. But, by and large, these appointments are given only by virtue of being the wives of the army officers. As against the third hypothesis, the study finding is about negative impact of Church on the political participation of women in the election context.

#### RURAL-URBAN DICHOTOMY

Compared to other states of the Indian Union, difference in the political participation between the urban women and the rural women in Mizoram is very less. There is no difference regarding the voter-turnout rate between the two areas and the literacy percentages of the different districts of the State are more or less the same. The major difference that is found between the urban and rural women is in the candidacy for the Assembly elections held in the state. Almost all of the women candidates irrespective of the political parties, in the past Assembly elections were from urban areas. The rural women were visible only in the times of the village council elections held in their localities. Unlike the women in other states, rural women in Mizoram are less conscious politically, thus their participation in election is also very less. With this finding, the fourth hypothesis is tested.



The study revealed that in the urban local government in Mizoram, most of the women members want to contest again in the elections and continue with their work for the development of the city. However, only 47 % of the women members of the village councils in the different rural areas of the state admits that they wanted to contest again in the next elections, while half of the women members, that is, 50 % did not want to contest again while 3 % did not respond to the question. It is desirable to have positive answers to this question but at the same time, one has to suffice with the positive response of almost half of the women members given that the reservation of seats for women in the local governments has been put into practice only recently, i.e from 2015 and the first term is still going onwards.

In Mizoram, the environment within the political parties is not women friendly. The women have to struggle and face great hardships, issues and competitions to create space for them in the party, which applies for both the national and the regional parties. The political parties discriminate women not only in the allotment of seats at the time of elections but also in the party's rank and file and chain of command. The women have opportunities to become leaders only in the women's wing of political parties which do not give them much chance to stand out within the party. None of the political parties functioning in the state have women as their party president or vice-president and the non-election of women to these posts is mainly the result of patriarchal mindset of the members. Even when the women are allotted seats to contest in the elections, right before competing with their political rivals in their constituency, they have to fight their own fellow party-men first for getting the

tickets and the women contestants further admitted that within the party competition was much tougher than that in the elections.

Meanwhile, it is important for socio-political institutions like state, family and community, to respond to the women's specific needs such as bridging gaps in education and employment. Thus, reconstruction of gender roles, the gender division of labour and addressing biased attitudes is need of the hour. This can bring out gender parity and promote able women to have more meaningful and fruitful participation in political process.

Infact, the women themselves find an active political career difficult to combine with home-making. In most cases, women were simply drawn into political activity of other members of the family. Some traditional factors like religion, customs and traditions could at times work against women's participation in an active way in the decision-making process of the locality, state and the country. Although women are almost equal to men in population, women constitute only zero to five percent of the contestants till the recent 2018 elections. The number of women contestants had increased considerably upto almost eight percent but not a single one of them captured a seat. Those who belong to well-known parties always have better chances of winning in the elections. There are women's wings in each political party, but they have no positive role to play. Very few women participate or witness political activities like meetings, rallies or campaigning. Besides the social and religious conventions, lack of training and promotion among women have limited their participation.

In the study, it has been found that many of the women members had no previous political exposure and experience. Majority of them admitted that they belong to a political party but they have never held any significant political posts. It has been found that 62 % of the women members of the local governments have contested the election because of reservation of seats for women. While only 38 % contested on the basis of their own free will which indicated that many of the women members had entered politics and occupied their seats only because of political reservation policy of the government. Among the women members, 34 % declared that they became members because of their interest in politics while 66 % admitted that they entered politics due to invitation by their relatives, friends and party-men in their local areas.

This study revealed that though the number of women voters had been more than the number of men voters, the representation of women in the state legislature, parliament and decision-making bodies has been very disappointing. One of the reasons for the poor representation of women in the legislative assembly as well as in other decision-making bodies, is that there had always been a very small number of women contestants.

Political parties in Mizoram seem to be very reluctant to field women candidates. They have been putting up only a very small number of women candidates in the past elections, consequently the percentage of women contestants continued to range between zero and five percent except for the last election. There is also scarcity of women in other decision-making bodies especially prior to the implementation of seat reservation for women. From 1972 to 2019, for almost fifty years, there had

been only two women in the rank of minister of state. The study concluded that whatever may be the reason, the whole survey presents a very disappointing picture of women's participation in the state politics. Despite changes that had taken place in society and women's status, their participation in political affairs still remains marginal.

The data obtained from the election results indicate the high voter turnout in Mizoram elections. Women do take part in the elections, but it is confined to the exercise of franchise only. But they do not seem to be interested in other aspects of electoral process such as canvassing, attending election meetings and contesting in elections. It is further observed that as the intensity of participation increases, the number of women who participate in such activities decreases progressively as is observed in other parts of India as well.

From the various interviews conducted by the researcher with women leaders in different fields, it has been observed that there is absence of women to women acceptance among the Mizo women themselves. This has proved as a barrier in the political ladder for the women but this is absent in the case of men. This fact has been shown clearly in the different elections that have been held so far. Because, even though there are more women voters in Mizoram, the women candidate still lost to their male rivals. Majority of the respondents have given their support regarding reservation of seats for women in the different levels of government but at the same time, they expressed that there were still many obstructions for women in the path to political power.

Another controversial finding of the research is many of the influential women leaders do not support reservation policy for women saying that it was a form of discrimination on the basis of sex. They feel that women are equal partners of men and should not be treated as inferior to their male counterparts even in political aspects. The able women should compete with men as general candidates without any reservation which would prove their capability at par with men.

#### STATUS AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS

The women political leaders in Mizoram, however few in number, have proved themselves to be able rulers and administrators in their own domain. The four elected women members of the state legislative assembly have played their part well during their own tenures. They had not faced any difficulties from their male colleagues nor from the officials. The two women ministers-of-state, Lalhlimpuii and Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu were given the portfolios of Social Welfare Department, Corporation Department and Fisheries Department which they have performed as good as any other male member if not better.

The study indicated that participation of women in local self-government and its decision-making process in terms of attendance, opinions expressed and issues raised in the meetings shows their confidence and satisfaction levels. The women members are not mute spectators or just simple ornaments in the decision-making process but they played actual roles in the performance of their duties. They maintained contact with localities, listened to them and tried to deliver whatever possible for them. The study revealed that almost all the women members of the local government, that is, 97 % of them take active part in the deliberations and meetings of the council and

perform the same duties as those of the male members which is a very great achievement inspite of their inexperience and very recent implementation of women's reservation of the seats in local government. Thus, it can be concluded that women political leaders in Mizoram are able women who performed their role to the best possible extent.

#### SUGGESTIONS:

1. Promoting a motivating environment for women, which may be in the form of a legal framework, policy and planned actions and their participation in the political process, electoral, legislative and administrative levels at local, State and national level.
2. Promotion of women's skills and capacities to help them actively participate in democratic process through leadership training and other skill enhancement workshops. More women should develop interest in the politics of the state and the country as a whole and not just consider it as a men's arena, they should realise that they are equal partners in the development of the country and not just passive observers.
3. Promote the participation of young and educated women, which may be participation in political and decision-making positions at all levels through elected or non-elected positions.
4. Awareness on gender sensitization and gender issues need to be generated among the Mizo people by including them in the syllabus starting from the high school level.

Awareness generation needs to be created among the women in their mobilization and training for their new political roles. Every women, especially the women-leaders, have to know about themselves, their rights, the nature of their political system, the innumerable problems facing the country and the political process through which decisions are made and policies formulated. A determined effort is necessary by all institutions and individuals who care for women, and do not want them to remain political cripples forever, with proper training and guidance. Women could share more effectively the political decision-making in the grass-root level and in the higher state level as well.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS IN ENGLISH

1. Aleaz, Bonita., *Emergent Women: Mizo women's perspectives*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2005.
2. Ambedkar, Nagendra S and Shilaja Nagendra., *Role of Women in Panchayati Raj*, ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2006.
3. Avasthi, A.P., *Indian Government and Politics*, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 2011.
4. Avasthi, Abha and A.K Srivastava (Ed.), *Modernity, Feminism and Women Empowerment*, Rawat publications, Jaipur, 2001.
5. Bandhyopadhyay, P.K., *Leadership among the Mizos*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1990.
6. Biju, M.R., *Women's Empowerment*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2006.
7. Binder, Leonard and Joseph La Palombara., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development*, Princeton University Press, 1979.
8. Braden, Maria., *Women Politicians and the Media*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996.
9. Chanchreek, K.L and MKJain., *Eminent Women Politicians*, Shree Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2007.
10. Chander, Prakash., *"Restructuring Political Profile of Women in India"* Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2000.
11. Chandra, Puran., *Political Dynamics of Women*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2005.



12. Chandra, U, *Human Rights*, Allahabad Law Agency Publications, Allahabad, 2013.
13. Chatterjee, Dr. Suhas., *Mizoram Encyclopaedia*, Jaico Publishing House, 1990.
14. Chaube, S.K., *Electoral Politics in North East India*, Universities Press Pvt Ltd, Calcutta, 1985.
15. Chaube, S.K., *Hill Politics in North East India*, Orient Longman Ltd, Calcutta, 1999.
16. Chopra, J.K., *Women in the Indian Parliament: A Critical Study of their Role*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1993.
17. Das, Kalpana., *Rural Development in Mizoram*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004.
18. Dutta, Anuradha and Ratna Bhuyan (Eds.), *Women and Peace: Chapters from Northeast India*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2008.
19. Flemming, Janet A., *Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government*, Sage Publications Inc, California, 1984.
20. Ghai, KK., *Political Sociology*, Kalyani Publishers, New Delhi, 2011
21. Ghosh, Anindita (Ed)., *Behind the veil: Resistance, Women and the Everyday in Colonial South Asia*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2007.
22. Ghosh, Bhola Nath., *Women in Governance in Tripura*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2008.
23. Grover, Verinder., *Electoral System, Behaviour and Elections*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1997.

24. Guha, Sampa., *Political Participation of Women in a Changing Society*, Inter India Publications, New Delhi, 1996.
25. Hrahsel, Lalchhuanawma, *Mizoram Statistics 2014*, SB Offset Printing, Aizawl, 2014.
26. Jharta, Bhawana., *Women and Politics in India: Impact of Family and Education on Women political Activists*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1996.
27. John, CB and Ellen Low Webster (Eds.), *The Church and Women in the Thirld World*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1985.
28. Jones, Ian, Janet Wootton., Kristy Thorpe (Eds.), *Women and Ordination in The Christian Churches*, T&T Clark, New York, 2008.
29. Joshi, H.G., *Mizoram: Past and Present*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2010
30. Kar, Bimal K, *Women Population of North East India: A Study in Gender Geography*, Regency Publications, New Delhi, 2002.
31. Kasturi Leela and Vina Mazumdar (Eds.), *Women and Indian Nationalism*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1994.
32. Kumari, Archana and R.K. Verma (Eds.), *Women Political leadership in India: Some Important Dimensions*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2010.
33. Kumari, Prasanna., *Women in Church and Society*, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai, 1999.
34. Kumari, R.Letha., *Women in Politics: Participation and Governance*, Authors Press, Delhi, 2006.

35. Lalchawiliana and K.Lalchhuanawma (Eds.),*Religion and Women: Pilgrims In Search Of Justice And Equity, A Festschrift in Honour of Prof.T.Vanlalhlani*, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 2017.
36. Lalchungnunga.,*Mizoram: Politics of regionalism and National Integration*,Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994
37. Lalkima,c and Lalneihzovi (Eds.), *Participation of Women in Politics and Governance: Local and State in Mizoram*, Lois Bet Print & Publication, Aizawl, 2018.
38. Lalneihzovi,., *Changing Status of Women in North Eastern States*,Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2009.
39. Lalnithanga, P., *Political Developments in Mizoram*, Mizoram Publication Board, 2006.
40. Lalrinthanga,H.,*Church and State: relationship in the Mizo Socio-Political Life 1952 to 2006*,The Indian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, Delhi, 2013.
41. Lalsiamhnuna, *Political Problems of Mizoram: A Study of Ethnic Politics with Special Reference to the Hmar People's Movement*, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 2011.
42. Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawii (Eds.), *Mizo Narratives: accounts from Mizoram*, Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2014.
43. Mandal, Ram Krishna and Minto Ete, *Women in North East India*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2010.
44. Menon, Nivedita (Ed), *Gender and Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999.

45. Milbrath, M, *Political Participation*, Rand, Macknell & Co. Chicago, 1965,  
p.26
46. *Mizo Women Today*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1991.
47. Mitra, Jyoti., *Women and Society: Equality and Empowerment*, Kanishka Publishers, Distributors, New Delhi, 1999.
48. Monroe, T., *An Introduction to Politics: Lectures for the First Year Students*, Canoe: Kingston, 2002.
49. Nag, ChittaRanjan., *Post-Colonial Mizo Politics*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1999.
50. Nagendra, Ambedkar S and Shilaja Nagendra, *Role of Women in Panchayati Raj*, ABD Publishers, Jaipur, 2006.
51. Narang, A.S., *Indian Government and Politics*, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 2001.
52. Nelson, Barbara and Najma Chowdhury., *Women and Politics Worldwide*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994.
53. Nunthara, C., *Mizoram-Society and Polity*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1996.
54. Padhya, K.S and P.P. Tripathy., *Voting Behaviour of Tribals in India*, Kanishka Publishers, Delhi, 1994.
55. Pandey, S., *Women in Politics*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1990.
56. Patnaik, Jagadish K.(Ed)., *Mizoram- Dimensions and Perspectives: Society, economy and polity*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2008.
57. Patnaik, Jagadish K et.al (Eds.) *Autonomy Movements and Politics of Regionalism in North East India*, Balaji Publications, Meerut, 2018.

58. Palmer, ND., *Elections and Political Developments in India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976.
59. Phadke, Sindhu, *Women's Status in North-Eastern India*, Decent Books, New Delhi, 2008.
60. Prasad, R.N., *Government and Politics in Mizoram*, Northern Book Centre, New Delhi, 1987.
61. Prasad, R.N, AK Agarwal.,*Political and Economic Development of Mizoram*,Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1991.
62. Pruthi, Raj and Bela Rani Sharma,. *Women, Society and Christianity*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1995.
63. Raju,M.Lakshmipathi (Ed.),*Women Empowerment: Challenges and Strategies*,Regal Publications, New Delhi, 2007.
64. Ralte, Lalrinawmi,. *Women, Re-Shaping Theology, Introducing Women's Studies in Theological Education in India*, United Theological College, Bangalore, 1998.
65. Ram,S (Ed) *Women and Social Change*, Common Wealth Publishers, New Delhi, 2004.
66. Ramchander and K Lakshmi., *Women and Politics: A Study in Political Participation*, Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1993.
67. Rani, A.Celine., *Emerging Pattern Of Rural Women Leadership in India*, Kalpaz Publication, Delhi, 2002.

68. Roy, Kalpana., *Women in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, Delhi, 1999.
69. Rizvi, SHM, Shibani Roy., *Mizo Tribes of North East India*, B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1985.
70. Sangkima., *A Modern History of Mizoram*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 2004.
71. Sangkima., *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Spectrums Publications, Guwahati, 2004.
72. Saxena, Kiran (Ed), *Women and Politics*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2000.
73. Shakespeare, Lt.Col.J, *The Lusei Kuki Clans*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2008.
74. Sharma, Sanjay et.al. (Eds.), *Women's Movements: Politics and Awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006.
75. Shastri, Sandeep, KCSuri and Yogendra Yadav(Eds.), *Electoral Politics in Indian States: Lok Sabha Elections in 2004 and beyond*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009.
76. Singh, K.S., *People of India- Mizoram Volume-XXXIII*, Anthropological Survey of India, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1995.
77. Singh, S.N., *Mizoram- Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1994.

78. Singh, Shyama Nand, *Reservation : Problems And Prospects*, Uppal Publishing House, New Delhi, 1991.
79. Sinha, Haendra and B Lalrinchhani (Eds.), *Women in Mizo Society*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2013.
80. Sinha, Niroj(Ed.), *Women in Indian Politics*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 2006.
81. Sircar, Manjusri Chaki., *Feminism in a Traditional society: Equality and Empowerment*, Shakti Books, Ghaziabad, 1984.
82. Smelser and PB Baltes (Eds.) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Behavioural Sciences*, Amsterdam, 2002.
83. Thapar, Suruchi, BJorkert., *Women in the Indian National Movement: Unseen faces and Unheard Voices 1930-42*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2006.
84. Tewary, I.N., *State Politics in India*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1989.
85. Verma, R.P., *People's Participation in Indian Politics*, Rajat Publications, New Delhi, 2002.
86. Verba et al., *Voice and Equality, Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, London: Harvard, 1995.
87. Verma, Sudhir., *Women's Struggle for Political Space: From Enfranchisement to Participation*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1997.

88. Verghese Brig. C.G, R.L. Thanzawna., *A History of the Mizos Volume- II*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd,

89. Vir, Dharam and Kamlesh Mahajan., *Women's Movements: Politics and awareness*, New Academic Publishers, New Delhi, 2006.

90. Zubeno Kithan(Ed), *Women in Church and Society*, Sceptre, ESPACE,Kolkata, 2014.

### BOOKS IN MIZO

1. Challiana, Pastor, *Pi Pu Nun*, Lalrinliana and Sons, Aizawl, Reprint 1990.
2. Chaltuahkhuma., *Political History of Mizoram*, Mizoram Publication Board, Aizawl, 2001.
3. Darchungnunga., *Kohhran Leh Mizoram Politics*, Synod Literature and Publication Board, Aizawl, 2017.
4. Lalthangliana, B., *India, Burma & Bangladesh a Mizo Chanchin*, The RTM Press, Aizawl, 2001.
5. Lalthangliana, B., *India, Burma leh Bangladesh a Mizo Kohhrante*, The RTM Press, Aizawl, 2007.
6. Laltlani, P.C., *Kohhran Hmeichhe Chanchin; Mizoram Presbyterian Kohhran* L.T Hmangaihthanga, Aizawl, 2003.
7. Rothangpuii, Teresa., *Ka Chan Tawka Khawrel*, Self-Published, Aizawl, 2017.
8. Thanglura, A., *Zoram Politic Lumleh Dan*, MCL Publications, Aizawl, 1999.



9. Vanlaltlani, T., *Mizo Hmeichhiate Kawng zawh*, Mizoram Publication Board, Aizawl, 2007.
10. Vanhnuaithanga, R., *Zalenna Thurin Leh Mizo Hmeichhiate*, Lengchhawn Press, Aizawl, 2007.
11. Vanthuama, H., *Mizoram Politics Chanchin; 1952 hmalam*, Lalmawii, Aizawl, 2001.
12. Zatluanga., *Mizo Chanchin*, Directorate of Art and Culture, Aizawl, 1996.
13. Zawla, K., *Mizo Pi Pute leh an Thlahte Chanchin*, Samuel Press, Aizawl, 1993.
14. Zofa, Lalhmachhuana., *Mizoram Political Records*, Diktawn Press, Aizawl, 2013.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

1. Chary, Manju Rama., "Women and political participation in India," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, LXXIII, No.1, p.123.
2. Chaudhuri, Ajit., "A Treatise on Participation," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVIII, No.40.
3. Conway, Margaret., "Women and Political Participation, Political Science and Politics," *American Political Science Association*, Vol.34, No.2, 2001, p.231.
4. Devi, Syamala D and G. Lakshmi, Political Empowerment of Women in Indian Legislature: A Study, *The Indian Journal of Political*, Vol. LXVI, No.1, Jan-March, 2005

5. Derichs, Claudia and Mark Thomson (Eds.), *Dynasties and Female Political Leaders in South Asia*, Project Discussion Paper No.8, 2004, p.2
6. Klein,Hans., “*The Right to Political Participation and the Information Society*” Seminar Paper presented at Global Democracy Conference, 2005.
7. Kumar, Ashutosh., “Rethinking State Politics in India: Regions within Regions,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol XLIV, No.19, 2009, p.17.
8. Mohan, Nisha., “*Problem and Challenges of Women Participation in Politics*” Paper presented in 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research, 2018.
9. Lalneihzovi., “Women and Political Empowerment in Mizoram”, *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. LX, No.3, July-September, 2014, p.652.
10. Vanlaltlani, T., “*Necessity of participation of women in Politics*” Seminar Paper presented in I&PR Conference Hall, 2012.
11. Sangkima, Women and Politics in Mizoram Through The Ages, *Historical Journal Mizoram*, Vol.III, Issue.I, Mizo History Association, July, 2002, p.27
12. Sarmin,Utsa., “Women in Bengal:1950-1975,” *Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. LXXVII, No.2, April-June, 2016, p.269.
13. Schonfeld,William.R., “The meaning of Democratic Participation,” *World Politics*, Vol.XXVIII, No.1 p.12.

14. Rai, Anuradha., "Women in Democracies : Quota System and Political Empowerment of Women in Changing Societies," *Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.LXXVII, No.1, Jan-March, 2016, p.15.
15. Singh, Pitam and J.K Pundir., "Women Legislators in UP " *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 9, 2002.
16. *Statistical Handbook Mizoram 2012* published by Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Mizoram, Aizawl.

#### NEWSPAPERS/ PERIODICALS:

1. Vanglaini (Aizawl, Mizo)
2. Times of India (English)
3. India Today (English)
4. Agape (Mizo)
5. The Frontier Despatch (English)

#### INTERNET SOURCES:

[www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-parties](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-parties)

[www.ndi.org/womens-political-participation](http://www.ndi.org/womens-political-participation)

[www.business-standard.com](http://www.business-standard.com)

[www.differencebetween.net](http://www.differencebetween.net)

[www.keydifferences.com](http://www.keydifferences.com)

[www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

[www.post.jagran.com](http://www.post.jagran.com)

[www.indikosh.com](http://www.indikosh.com)

[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

<https://factly.in>

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

<https://economictimes.com>

[www.dnaindia.com](http://www.dnaindia.com)

[www.global.oup.com](http://www.global.oup.com)

[www.fiu.edu](http://www.fiu.edu)

[www.eduresourcecollection.com](http://www.eduresourcecollection.com)

[www.newworldencyclopedia.org](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org)

[www.india.gov.in](http://www.india.gov.in)

<https://en.wikipedia.org>

<https://college.cengage.com>

[www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com)

[www.loksabha.nic.in](http://www.loksabha.nic.in)

[www.oddnaari.in](http://www.oddnaari.in)

[www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com)

<https://the.wire.in>

[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)

[www.the-guardian.com](http://www.the-guardian.com)

[www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

[www.ndtv.com](http://www.ndtv.com)

<https://electionlab.org>

[www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com)

[www.tandfonlinr.com](http://www.tandfonlinr.com)

[www.eastmojo.com](http://www.eastmojo.com)

[www.ecireresults.nic.in](http://www.ecireresults.nic.in)

[www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)

#### NAMES OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED:

1. Ms. Vanlalawmpuii Chawngthu, Aizawl on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2018
2. Mrs. Lalhlimpuii Hmar, Aizawl on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2018
3. Mrs. Lalmalsawmi, Aizawl on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2018
4. Mrs. Sangnawni, Lawngtlai on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2019
5. Ms. Lalhmingmawii, Aizawl on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2018
6. Mrs. Lalhmingliani Hmar, Aizawl on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2018
7. Mrs. Lalsiamliani, Aizawl on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2018
8. Mrs. Zolawmi, Aizawl on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2018
9. Mrs. Rengpuii, Aizawl on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2018
10. Mrs. Laldinliani, Champhai on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018
11. Mr. Vantawnliana, Aizawl on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2018
12. Mrs. R. Zomuanpuii, Aizawl on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2018
13. Mrs. K. Lalhmingliani, Aizawl on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2018
14. Mrs. B. Lalawmpuii, Aizawl on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017
15. Mr. Rev.RC Lalchhuanthanga, Aizawl on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2019
16. Mrs. Engmawii, Aizawl on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2018
17. Mrs. Dingpuii, Aizawl on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN MIZORAM

**Section – I**

1. Do you cast your votes regularly in the different elections in the state? (Inthlanna chi hrang hrang ah vote I thlak ziah thin em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

2. Why do you vote? (Eng vangin nge vote I thlak thin?)

a) To elect representative (Ai awh thlang chhuak turin)

b) To help the candidate win by providing assistance (Candidate tan zawng thlang tling turin)

c) To get favour and benefits from candidate (Candidate hnen atanga hlawkna dawng turin)

3. What motivates you to vote? (Engin nge vote thlak tir thin che?)

a) Service to the nation (Ram rawngbawlna a nih avangin)

b) Monetary or other allurements (Sum leh thildang therhlo vangin)

c) Request by friends/ relatives/ candidates or their agents/ others  
(Thiante/chhungte/candidate leh aiawh ten an sawm vangin)

4. Do you discuss political issues during the elections? (Inthlan lai in politics lampang thil in sawi ngai em?)







- a) She is on equal footing with men in this regard (Mipate nen an in tluk tlan renga vangin)
- b) Our Constitution guarantees equal political rights to men and women(Kan ram danpui in mipa leh hmeichhia a enhran loh avangin)
- c) Her achievements in political fields itself (Politics huangchhunga a thawh that dan a zirin)

14. If no, why? (That tawk lohna chhan)

- a) Lack of social interaction (Khawtlang a tel tam tawk theih loh avangin)
- b) Damaging to image and character (Hmingchhiat/Hmingthatna a thlen awlsam avangin)
- c) Criminalization of politics (Politics thianghlim loh avangin)

15. What are the reasons for low participation rate of women in politics in Mizoram? (Mizoram politics ah hian engvangin nge hmeichhia an tlem?)

- a) Ignorance (Ngaihsak lohna vangin)
- b) Involvement in domestic duties (In chungkhur buaina vangin)
- c) Economic constraints (Sum harsatna vangin)
- d) Lack of leadership (Hotu nih tlintawk lohna vangin)
- e) Male dominance (Mipa lalna khawtlang a nih vangin)

16. Do you think that more women should participate and have stronger voice in the administration of the state? (Mizo hmeichhiate hi ram inkaihhraina ah hian tam zawk telin aw te nei thin se tha I ti em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

17. Do you approve that political parties in Mizoram should accord more opportunities to women to be represented in the Legislature? Mizorama political party te hian ram rorelna hmunah hmeichhiate an tel tam ve theih nan remchanna siam leh zual sela tha I ti em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

18. Are you in favour of reservation of seats for women in legislative bodies? (Ram rorelna hmuna hmeichhiate tan a seat hauhsak hi tha I ti em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

19. Do you agree that reservation of seats for women has enhanced their participation on politics? (Seat hauhsakna hian hmeichhiate tan awmzia a neiin I hria em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

20. Are you a member of any women's organization? (Hmeichhe pawl engberah emaw telna I nei em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

21. Do you think that women enjoy an equal status with men in real life? (Hmeichhia leh mipate hi a takah kan dinhmun a in ang in I hria em?)

a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

22. Should women be educated? (Hmeichhiate tan lekhathiam hi a pawimawh I ti em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

23. Do you think that the status of educated women in relation to uneducated women is superior? (Hmeichhe lekhathiamte hi thiamlo aiin an dinhmun a sang zawkin I hria em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

24. Do you believe in full time career for women? (Hmeichhiate hian hna ngialnghet nei sela tha I ti em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

25. If yes, why? (Tha tih chhan)

- a) It gives confidence (Inrintawkna a pe)  
b) It gives economic independence (Mahni a intodelh tir)  
c) It gives better status in society (Khawtlang ah an dinhmun a tha zawk)

26. If no, why? (Tha tih loh chhan)

- a) Economic independence breaks the family (Chhungkua a tikeh awlsam zawk thei)  
b) They have less time for family (Chhungkaw tan hun an neitlem)  
c) Lead towards disrespect to their husbands (Pasalte an zah loh phah)



**Section – II (For AMC/LC/VC members)**

1. You have contested in the AMC/LC/VC elections due to (AMC/VC/LC inthlan ah hian engvanga tel nge I nih?)

a) Real interest in politics (Politics a tui vang)

b) The need to fill up the reserved seats (Seat hauhsak awmvang)

2. Have you encountered difficulties in the discharge of your administrative functions for being a woman? (Hmeichhia I nih avangin I hnathawhna kawngah harsatna I tawk thin em?)

a) Yes (Aw)

b) No (Aih)

3. Do you sit quietly or voice your opinion during the meetings and deliberations? (Meeting ah I thu ngawireng thin nge ngaihda I sawive thin?)

a) Sit quietly (Thu ngawireng)

b) Voice opinion (Sawive thin)

4. Do you feel different after being elected as member in the local government? (Thlantlin in nih hnu ah nangmah ah danglamna a awm em?)

a) Yes (Aw)

b) No (Aih)

5. Do you have more confidence after being elected? (Thlantlin I nih hnu ah nangmah ah inrintawkna I neih belh em?)

a) Yes (Aw)

b) No (Aih)

6. After being elected, do you have more responsibilities in the society other than being a member of the local government? (Thlantlin I nih hnuah khawtlang ah mawhphurhna dang I neih tam phah sawt em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

7. After being elected, do you receive differential regards from the people? (Thlantlin I nih hnu ah mi in an en dan che a danglam em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

8. Do your family members, especially your husband, try to interfere in your work?(I chhungte, a bik takin I pasal, I hna ah inrawlh v ephet an tum ngai em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

9. Are you really interested in politics or you participate because of request/invitation from friends/family members/party members? (Politics hi I tui ve hrim hrim nge midang sawmn avanga tel?)

- a) Friends (Thiante)              b) Family members (Chhungte              c) Party  
members (Party mi leh sate)

10 .Will you contest again in the next election? (Inthlan leh hunah din I tum leh em?)

- a) Yes (Aw)                      b) No (Aih)

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MIZO PEOPLE'S FORUM

1. To work towards establishing democratic government through free and fair election
2. To reform the electoral process and do away with corruption and malpractices in the electoral system in the state
3. To put in place a transparent, accountable and responsible government
4. To educate the people on the governance issue and make them to be a responsible citizen
5. To guide and advise the government on developmental issues
6. To conduct social audits for the social reforms
7. To counter any form of violence, use of arms and terrorism

The constituent members of the MPF are as follows:

1. Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram (PCI)
2. Evangelical Church of Maraland (ECM)
3. Roman Catholic
4. Evangelical Free Church of India (EFCI)
5. Laram Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran (LIKBK)
6. Wesleyan Methodist
7. Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA)

8. Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP)
9. Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)
- 10 . Mara Thuttya P (MTP)
11. Young Lai Association (YLA)
12. Young Chakma Association (YCA)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MIZO HMEICHHE TANGRUAL (Mizo Women's Organisation)

1. To play the rightful home at home and in the society
2. To promote education and develop women in all spheres of life
3. To create better and healthy relation and better understanding between husband and wife
4. To play suitable roles in the development activities of the Lushai Hills
5. To help needy motherless babies
6. To run a Working Women's Hostel



## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF UNITED MIZO GRASSROOT WOMEN

1. To develop the women farmers and stabilise their position by giving them support
2. To impart the women members with more knowledge
3. To seek available benefits for the women members
4. To fulfil the aims and objectives of the organisation by cooperating and working with the government and with others

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ALL MIZORAM WOMEN FEDERATION

(AMWF)

1. Upliftment of women and to provide opportunities for them to have more participation in governance
2. To strengthen the women's organisations for the protection of the rights and privileges of women
3. To fight against violence and harassment against women and to put an end to it
4. To assist the State and the Central Governments in the successful implementation of policies and programmes for the benefit of women
5. To create a healthy cooperation amongst the women organisations operating inside and outside the state of Mizoram
6. To expose the talents and capabilities of Mizo women to other parts of the country

7. To impart knowledge on the aims and objectives of the organisation and obtaining funds for it
8. To work for securing the needs and aspirations of women and to try their best in it

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MIZO HMEICHHE INSUIHKHAWM PAWL  
(MHIP)

1. Development of Mizo society through development of women, preparing the Mizo women to take part in state administration
2. To render welfare services to women, destitute children, poor, handicapped and also to uplift the women's status in the society
3. To impart knowledge in various fields like handicrafts, family health, self-sufficiency and preparation of women to play important role in earning livelihood
4. To take proper care of children and to enable them to develop a healthy mind and body
5. To eradicate illiteracy amongst women and to abstain from any kind of violence
6. To fight against violence and atrocities against women

## **PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE**

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE : B. LALFAKAWMI

DEGREE : Ph.D

DEPARTMENT : POLITICAL SCIENCE

TITLE OF THE THESIS : POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF  
WOMEN IN MIZORAM

DATE OF ADMISSION : 21.08.2013

APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1. BOS : 28.03.2014

2. SCHOOL BOARD : 16.05.2014

REGISTRATION NUMBER : MZU/Ph.D/ 629 of 16.05.2014  
& DATE

EXTENSION : No. 16-2/MZU(Acad)/19/29-31,  
Dated.18June, 2019

## **BIODATA**

NAME : B.LALFAKAWMI

F.NAME : B.LALRINLIANA

D.O.B : 08.08.1972

EDUCATIONAL

QUALIFICATION : MA

ADDRESS : H.No. M-10/1, BAWNGKAWN SOUTH,  
AIZAWL, MIZORAM

RELIGION : CHRISTIAN

OCCUPATION : ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

GENDER : FEMALE

MARITAL STATUS : MARRIED

Ph.D REG.No. : MZU/Ph.D./629 of 16.05.2014

DEPARTMENT : DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

TITLE OF THESIS : POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN  
IN MIZORAM