



Gender Equality and Social Equity in Nagaland: A Study

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ABSTRACT:

As a social justice, gender equality was associated with the efforts to create a world where male and female persons are similar in terms of experiences, opportunities, chances, and liberties as well as possibilities for various opportunities. Social equity can be understood as fair dealing in the society at large, while gender equity relates to equal rights of male and female genders. There are what I can describe as prejudice-inspired cultural/traditional beliefs that have persisted to this time and which have continued to deny women that transformation in Nagaland. In a bid to fight for the equality of men and women and encourage women to participate in major decision-making, the following policies are enacted in Nagaland state: Nagaland State Policy for Women (NSPW). Education, health, finance, voting, and civil liberties are some other issues in the concerns of NSPW. This paper explored how some of these aspects impact general inequality and to this end, Nagaland an effort has to be made in the state to move ahead in the direction of social equity by reducing some of the existing social inequalities in the state like tribal differences and owning of land and resources. Therefore, the various ethnic groups in the state need to embrace the following goal to foster social justice: Improving ethnic contact between different ethnic groups. Addressing gender issues and implementing the attainment of those goals and objectives, and to reduce gender disparities and promoting social justice in the territory of Nagaland, it is only sensible to note that state civil society and local population initiatives are necessary. The type of method analysis applied for the study is a descriptive type of analysis. The first objective of this study is to describe women's legal protections in modern Nagaland; the second is to learn about women's economic participation in the state; and the third is to analyze the development of women's educational opportunities there.

Keywords: Women's Rights, Empowerment, Employment, Education

Introduction:

Gender equality and people's equality in rights and opportunities for both sexes are clear justice and human rights. Social Justice is the effort of preventing or combating unfair differences by methods including racial or economic status; while gender justice seeks to grant opposite sex persons equal rights, chances or factors. Speaking collectively, such principles gradually work toward a society where people of certain race, color, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation are not discriminated or their worth unacknowledged. For matters of gender and social equity to take root, there must be formation of culture to diversity and equity. That makes it a group work since it meant the lives of people as well as the whole world to be rich, peaceful and happy. However, there is no manner that all people will be given a chance to live fulfilling fruitful lives and realize their full potential without finding gender equality. This shows a shift from the norm of the current sociological set up of perception and behavior that marginalizes women constantly. Local policy, law and institution should be supportive to gender equity, the focus is on women, their rights and emancipation from Patriarchy. There is a noticeable way of enhancing gender equality through provision of education which should involve cognitive, affective importance of sensitive understanding and male/female stereotyping in present culture. Apart from that it is the right thing to involve men and boys in the struggle for the upliftment of women because toxic sexuality has penetrated our societies and negative masculinity has to be countered and positive one that does not see other genders as less important has to be encouraged. Gender equity refers to the provision of equal treatment to sexes of people without discriminating them. It's one of the pillars of what is usually referred to as social justice hence the achievement of this goal can only be made possible by having a society that is both; justice. It can be ascertained that throwing open education, health, and job opportunities for both boys and girls and providing voting rights and eradicating discrimination based on gender provide the essence of the gender objective. While such cultural patterns and predetermined position of boy and girls has to be dismantled as they maintain unfairness and restrict opportunities for people. The human and social demands related to human rights and to social progress and sustainable development have their foundation in gender equality. This paper aimed at identifying the positives which can be achieved once women and girls are empowered, and gender parity achieved such as economic returns, health variations, poverty rate, and quality of life.

The present research utilized analytical and descriptive techniques. Books, newspapers, magazines, and official records were consulted for their descriptions of women's empowerment initiatives in Nagaland. The first objective of this study is to describe women's legal protections in modern Nagaland; the second is to learn about women's economic participation in the state; and the third is to analyze the development of women's educational opportunities there.

Each equitable and welcoming society comparable to Nagaland needs to move to enshrine gender parity and social justice. Educational social justice and gender equity policies have been drafted and implemented in Nagaland, an Indian state located in the northeastern region, credit for which goes to its variation in cultures and traditions. Measures to reduce inequalities have included from women's rights initiatives to campaigns against violence from men and boys. However, challenges remain especially to individuals in the remote or culturally rich places. Sustaining partnerships are therefore crucial for primary, secondary, and tertiary minority women and their communities true attainment for Gender Equality and Social Equity within Nagaland through Education, Economic Empowerment and Social Cultural Relationship. The structure of Nagaland society has traditionally been highly oppressive to women and discriminated against them in light of this, females. But attempts have been made in the state for the progress of social justice and for the equality of women. Over the course of the years subsequent policies have also been passed in a bid to address instances of gender discrimination in Nagaland. Navigate into realizing the rights of women in Nagaland the Nagaland State Women Commission Act was enacted in 2006. This law provides women with legal channel through which they can address discrimination and assault matters. Also, in the same year, the Nagaland Legislature had passed the Nagaland Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act to protect women from such male partner's violence and to provide women avenues to seek justice. As measures that establish methods of addressing Gender Based Discrimination and Violence, these legislative measures have gone along way in enhancing Gender as well as Social Justice. Also, the following Nagaleo based organisations several organisations of public and private sectors have been consistently striving for Women Right and Gender Power parity. For the women thus to empower them economically and socially, these groups encourage them to pursue education, skills and job opportunities. Gender equity and social justice in Nagaland has been a huge gain as well, through focus on education as a state priority. They have also tried to ensure that boys and girls get equal chance to go further with their studies. Consistency in scholarships, free text books among other awards have been embraced by the government of Kenya to improve in enrolment of female students as well as their retention. Therefore the percentage of literate Nagaland women has increased. When there is awareness and equal maturation of both the physical and human abilities of women and men, education benefits both. Special efforts that have been made in the recent past for Women's Empowerment include vocational training programmes, micro finance and other programs for entrepreneurial development. There have also been awareness being made on the importance of equality between male and female, birth control, and women's rights.

Women's Rights:

As on any other state in India there are many laws and ordinances followed in Nagaland for the protection of women. The Indian constitution has its provision of women protection in India and the latter has Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 and Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. The state government as well as other groups and activist has been working hard in order to empower women economically as well as socially. Women's right in Nagaland regards education as an important aspect. The gender disparities in literacy rate have been served by increasing provision of education to girls and women. The government tries to encourage education especially among the less fortunate by offering scholarships and other incentives, the government has developed policies and programmes to enhance girl's enrollment and attendance to school. Exposure to school has also been made possible through a means of awareness to do away with traditional gender stereotype. Also, steps have been taken by Nagaland government to halt violence against women and women rights protection. There are cases of domestic abuse, sexual harassment and human trafficking and these are types of crimes that have been addressed by the state government passing legislation to combat and creating mechanisms to deal with cases of. Only a list of numbers is not sufficient to support survivors of violence – helplines, crisis centres, counselling centres are just some of them. Attempts to increase the awareness of the problem of gender based violence and to create conditions where nobody will feel demeaned have also been taken. Another important area of research consists of the possibilities of economic independence.

A number of initiatives have been set in order to foster women entrepreneurship by offering them the supports such as education funds, capital, and networks. Through self-help group formed to support the communal saving and credit activities women have been able to start their own ventures and gain economic independence. It also contributes to the benefit of women and also the rejection of good traditional gender role perceptions. There has been some progress toward putting women into leadership positions in Nagaland. Due to lack of women at village councils and local bodies, the state government has prescribed some reservation policies to be followed. The objective of this affirmative action is to help boost the number of women in politics by making them have influence the policies they require in their lives. Combined initiatives of women associations, non-governmental organisations and the government have done much in preventing discrimination against ladies and empowering them aside from changing their representation in the council of leaders and civil jobs. In order to enhance women protection and fight gender based violence more legislations and policies have been put in place. However, much progress can still be made, Nagaland has made a tremendous progress to achieving gender parity or the upliftment of women.

Employment of Women:

The state of Nagaland has rich cultural values because of its indigenous people who have maintained those cultures even today. It is common to see women in these nations taking up important activities in the home and in the entire community but they are silenced in public space because of cultural practices. Obviously, such measure can only be successful if gender equality initiatives are sensitive to these cultural differences. As in the majority of other countries of the world, Nagaland has the problem of increasing gender equality and women's employment, which has to overcome cultural, social, economic, and political factors. Those are reasons why education especially on women is important in enhancing employment of women. The strategies should focus on bringing parity in the education level between Boy's and Girls, ensuring girl child education and ensuring women are empowered through vocational schools. Women education and their employment probabilities may help them to improve their position financially and socially. A cooperation between the government and non-profit organisations can be used to finance women's higher education and set up training centres.

Full and productive employment of women and equal access of women to economic assets are crucial now. For this purpose, there should be legislation made for women entrepreneurship development and policies to train and initiate women for agriculturists, tourism, handicrafts and service sector etc. The penetration of women in entrepreneurship leads to development of the economy and employment. It was identified that women business owners can apply for Government funding and completed a range of mentoring programmes. One has seen that even community level awareness campaigns are capable of challenging traditional gender roles. Ideally, the effectiveness of these initiatives requires support from local authorities, opinion-makers, as well as local organizations. In a bid to create organizations sensitive to gender issues, companies should establish training programmes on gender sensitization. It could also help in reducing case of discrimination of women in the employment sector and improved prospects of their success.

Education, healthcare, and infrastructure are just a few of the areas where the state has made great strides. However, there are a number of obstacles and limits to women's employment in Nagaland, as there are in other parts of India.

1. **Socio-Cultural factors:** Customs and beliefs of societies and cultures greatly influence the chances of women in Nagaland to be able to work. Naga women are expected to uphold the traditional, passive, domestic wifely and motherly duties in their society. Consequently, they remain confined to their homes in order to get an education or search for a better job.
2. **Lack of Skill Development:** However, similar to the issues highlighted above, the shortage of Women-specific training, either through distance learning or in 'Training for Trainers', remains an issue for women of Nagaland. The absence and scarcity of women's vocational training centres and programmes is unconstructive to the realization of the notion of skill development for employment. This limits their ability to obtain the training required for normal positions.
3. **Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment:** Nevertheless, it is equally a fact that most of the women in Nagaland are self-employed and are involved in independent working to earn their and their families livelihood. Some of the employment fields are tourism, handicrafts production, weaving and culinary services. Generally new and creative ideas have the potential of growing but they are usually slowed down by inadequate capital.
4. **Government Initiatives:** To improve the status of women and the level of the economic activity of the female population, the government of Nagaland runs various programmes. Some examples are:
 - (a) **Skill Development Programmes:** Training programmes supported by government in areas like tourism and hospitality as well as handicrafts are intended to help women gain productive employment.
 - (b) **Reservation Policies:** For purposes of enforcement of women representation in local governance bodies as well as in public service employment, the state government has set into practice reservation requirements.
 - (c) **Financial Support:** There are a number conditions to the receipt of such loans and government subsidies, and although there are many programmes aimed at assisting women company owners to start up or expand their businesses, they have been made available through the following ways.
 - (d) **Awareness Campaigns:** It shields women and girl child and gives them importance in the society through campaigns that support women in workplace.

Education for Women:

Over the years there have been much improvement in the region concerning women education in Nagaland but there are still some few issues of concern. Nagaland is also one of the most culturally diverse states in Northeastern part of India and famous for its rich history. This is a traditionally male dominated area where women have previously had little education at all. Nonetheless, there has been some efforts being made to upgrade condition of women education and try to focus on the equality of men and women. The current government of Nagaland has been contributing its best in opening educational opportunities to women. If the government and especially the Department of School school wants females to attend school as much as boys, they have to ensure the Department of School school does everything in its power to ensure that happens. The SSA is one of such projects, and it is a flagship programme whose aim is to make school education easily accessible by everyone. Through provision of free text books, uniforms, among other items this programme has acted as a motivation and incentive to increased enrollment and retention of female candidates. Some of the schools in Nagaland have been established for the Education of only girls. Nagaland University is among the best university to study undergraduate and post graduate in the country among women. The university provides scholarships and other types of assistance to all female students who meet the predetermined criteria. Some of the other well known universities and colleges are Women's College Kohima, Fazl Ali College Mokokchung, Mount Mary College Dimapur etc. There exist some programs aiming at providing the people of Nagaland more autonomy to deal with these challenges. Two such NGOs of Nagaland are Women's empowerment society (WES) and Nagaland women welfare society (NWWS) which both work for the upliftment of women. These groups also fight for women rights, gender equity so as to enable women get education and secure better jobs, they also organize awareness creation, skills enhancement and job training. However, challenges persisting with the female students in Nagaland are as follows: Patriarchal systems and norms that consider women's education as less important compared to their role in doing domestic works are a great hinderance. This leads to drop out of school among girls and the culture of early marriage among them. Most young girls are locked out of a proper education due to missing infrastructure and equipment especially in remote areas. Roles of Naga women also have undergone changes with the time. More women are assuming leadership positions

and are involved in decision making at organizational and personal levels in all areas of endeavour. Through this movement, the advancement of education for girl child is gradually being championed and the society transformed on the importance of women education.

Here's an overview of State education for women in Nagaland:

1. Literacy Rate: Education standards, especially feminine literacy, have been improving in Nagaland during the recent years. The women literacy in Nagaland was about 76.11% in 2011 according to the Indian census. However, such information is given and updated to 2011; may be the literacy rate has been improved thereafter.
2. Girl's Enrolment: While there is progress in the education rights of girl child, barriers to education stubborn still surface due to factors that are in place such as early marriage and more to it the cultural backward perception. But with regards to the former, efforts to heighten awareness and change the perception are actually addressing these issues.
3. Vocational and Skill Training: Not only do the women of Nagaland have rights to receive education, they are also provided vocational and skill training programmes so that they can be made self competent and self sufficient as per their desires.
4. Empowerment: It is indicated that education helps women to attain confidence and also gives her the responsibility. They help to not only enhance their economic position but political and social position in their respective community.
5. Digital Divide: Because of these problems, effective digital education is sometimes hard to come by in some of the resource challenged rural and isolated districts of Nagaland. The COVID-19 outbreak has recaptured the signal of addressing the gender digital divide to ensure that girls and women can finish their education when, back to school.

Conclusion:

With the help of laws, empowerments, and awareness, education, and awareness programs the issues of gender equality and social fairness in Nagaland have started to work. As much as the society has evolved through equal rights fights for all genders, it is still some distance to go before everyone can be treated as equal. If an inclusive and fair society has to be achieved within Nagaland it must require the consistent work of government related structures, CSOs and the people. Despite the significant achievements made in implementing the women's rights and gender equality in Nagaland, the country hardly has a long way. To overcome the above remaining challenges, the government, civil society organizations and other groups in the societies will have to do the following. Women education and vocational training, access to health care, and women's rights might benefit from enhanced funding, liberalization, and legalization correspondingly. Realization of genuine gender equality and a more justice society for all can be achieved through people's participation in Nagaland.

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