

Women's Contribution towards Economic Development in Naga Society

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Abstract:- Women have played a pivotal role towards the growth of economy. The economic development goes beyond growth as an indicator of development; it involves other indicators which directly addresses the issue of welfare and development in the society. Though women constitute approximately half of the total world population their share in the recognition of economic development is deplorably low; women have always been a part of the survival of any community for the welfare of the family and society as a whole. Research suggests that, increase in economic leadership of women results in highly beneficial performance in all dimensions. However, their roles are not recognized at par with men in the society. Undoubtedly, there has been a growing recognition of the primary talents, women's leadership capacity and their roles towards economic development yet their contribution is frequently overlooked. Women enjoy significant freedom and play a vital role in family and community life though the Naga society is patriarchal in nature. Women have a greater range of responsibilities, from domestic work to various agricultural activities. Gender disparity measures reveal that women's work frontier is expanding as they take over the economic work which was traditionally designated to men. The paper aims to highlight the contribution of Naga women towards economic development; it provides an overview of key challenges and outlines potential solutions to increase the recognition of Naga women's roles in economic development. The study is primarily based on secondary data.

Keywords:- Women, Naga Women, economic development, women entrepreneurs.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to UN Women (2023) the economic empowerment of women improve productivity, boosts economic transformation, efficiency, sustainability and income equality by advancing gender-responsive laws. It is estimated that women exhibit strong financial performance, promote progress not only economically but socially.

Women currently make up a significant portion of the global labour force. Women account for more than a third of the global labour force, with 30 out of every 100 women being economically engaged. Women make up more than two-fifths and nearly half of the workforce in various countries. In general, women have been shifting away from agriculture and moving into industry and service, particularly the latter, which currently employs more than half of all female workers in several nations. Women constitutes 47.7 per cent of the global workforce (Women in the workforce

statistics, 2022) and it is estimated that if the skills and talents of women are fully recognized the overall productivity is set to increase tremendously with more economic efficiency and developmental outcomes.

Women play a key role for the society. Their domestic labor is continuously undermined due to the fact that it is an unpaid work and thus viewed as non-economic. The household unpaid chores include health care, child care, home maintenance and nurturing of family etc. "In every society...women's daily invisible efforts to feed, clothes and nurture families are the actions that sustain their communities" (Sen & Grown, 1987). Schultz points out that "until women can acquire the requisite schooling and transferable skills to find suitable employment in firms in expanding sectors of the modern economy, the opportunity value of women's time relative to men's time may decline." (Mamman & Paxson, 2000).

II. WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to the World Bank Europe and Central Asia Chief Economist Asli, the global wealth has immensely benefitted from the women's role in economic development, it increases productivity and brings transformative change in the society; thus the World Group aims to reduce the obstacles that hinders women towards a progressive economic growth at all levels (The World Bank, 2022). For instance, the contribution of women's income in relation to household establishment has seen to be more associated with the family's everyday needs which highly indicate their productive role towards society at large. In the social and economic development, women are equal contributor as men and an agent of change, it is therefore crucial for inclusiveness in the overall economic mobilization to attain developmental goals (IANWGE, 2001).

The integral part of the development process is sidelined when there is no full recognition of women's role both at fulfilling the needs of the family and community. Lewis, an eminent student of development, has commented that "the transfer of women's work from the household to commercial employment is one of the most notable features of economic development"(Goldin,1983). There will be a better outcome of labor productivity, greater policy and provision for the welfare of the society, increase in women's participation through better allocation of their skills and strategic approach towards matters that concern women.

The "female manufacturing industries," where women account for more than half of all workers, have grown rapidly as a result of the rapid increase in the number of female industrial workers. Textile and clothing manufacturing, rubber and plastics manufacturing, electronic goods manufacturing, shoe manufacturing, and china and pottery manufacturing are all examples. In 1975, these "female manufacturing industries" accounted for 70 per cent of total national export earnings; in the 1970s, approximately 80 per cent of women in the manufacturing sector produced export-oriented products. During the 1980s, manufacturing employed over 70 per cent of women industrial wage workers, accounting for roughly 40 per cent of the manufacturing workforce. According to Michele Gran (2019) women comprise of 43 per cent of world's agricultural labor force which rises up to 70 per cent in some countries; report on Africa shows that the agricultural production by rural women comprises of 80 per cent as agriculture can be the engine of economic growth and poverty reduction. Remittances from overseas workers accounted for 9.7 per cent of gross domestic product and 8.1 percent of gross

national income in the Philippines in 2018, with a large percentage (more than 50%) of these workers being female and younger than their male counterparts.

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) 2022 emphasized on the importance of women's equal access to resources. These are closely associated with change that fundamentally shapes the sustainability and poverty reduction. Women entrepreneurs across India emerged towards building their own path in business building despite the existing barriers in the socio economic pattern of the society (Times of India, 2021). For instance, an exclusive all-female Indian Pilot team created history by operating an Indian national airline completing the longest (17 hrs) non-stop commercial flight.

According to the Women in Workforce Statistics 2022, the total Women's Global Workforce is 47.70 per cent of which Canada has the highest female labor workforce with 61.30 per cent (figure 1).

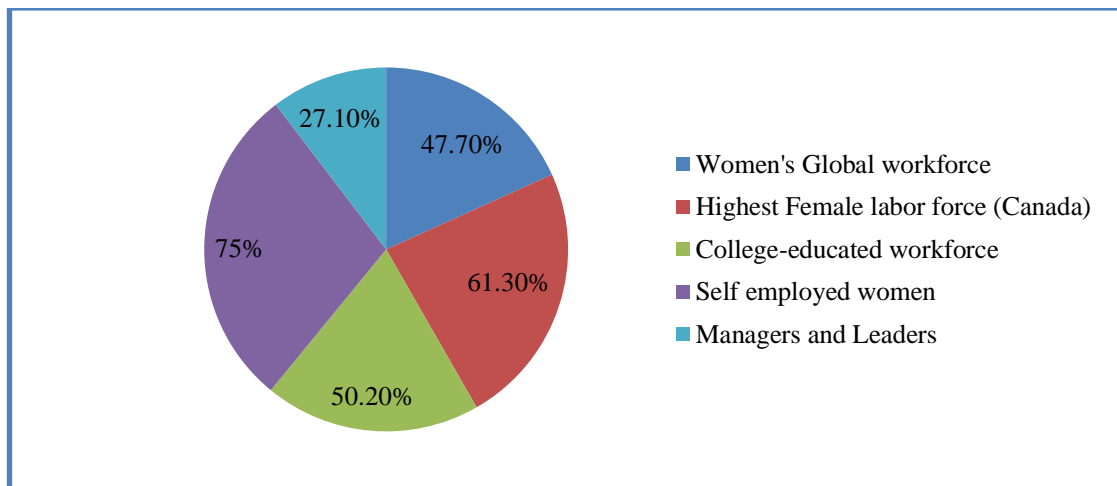


Fig. 1: Statistics on Women in Workforce

Source: Women in workforce statistics 2022

The campaign on change pays by Standard and Poors (S & P) Global 2019 survey, "Greater participation of women in the workplace leads to stronger, healthier and more advanced economies" (Peterson & Powers, 2019).

However, in threatening situation as pandemic, their income opportunities become vulnerable to male domination due to the lack of strong support base.

III. ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Many factors are influencing how women participate in the economy. While discrimination and built-in prejudice against women in the workplace have decreased in most parts of the world, many economic, social, and cultural factors and attitudes continue to disadvantage women in the workplace, limiting their contribution unnecessarily and, in many cases, unfairly. If women are to reach their full potential, give their all in the workplace, and also fulfil their various duties in society, a more constructive and inventive approach is required. Numerous factors such as political, legal and social

hinders women through the existing customary norms and practices which marginalize women from fully participating in economic developmental process. The subjugation starts at the emergence of the community itself which is prevalent in the existing socio political and economic pattern of the society. In a similar study, Desai (1998) made an extensive study on women's growing knowledge in an economic perspective such as property rights where there is a visible negligence on the part of society to address such issue.

According to World Bank (2015), Legal barriers in most countries prevents women from pursuing a profession, joining formal labor force market or becoming entrepreneurs or inherit assets . It's possible that labour markets in poor nations, particularly for women, aren't competitive. There may be additional expenditures connected with women working outside of the family farm or nonfarm family industry. At one extreme, laws may prohibit women from working outside the home; Afghanistan is a good example right now. Women's ability to accept paid work, particularly

in manual jobs, may also be limited by custom or social norms. Although economic change did not necessarily alter ideology, social norms may have played a role in defining and constraining women's economic roles. The dominant mindset that prevents married women from working is the belief that such activity is damaging to the family.

Women spend almost twice as much time on housework, almost five times as much time on child care, and about half as much time on market work as men do. Women's lower work market options may contribute to their uneven treatment at home. Female teenagers have lesser expectations than male teenagers, and parents have lower aspirations for their daughters. If women do not work outside the home, it is possible that they are under the impression that they do not need to be as strong and healthy, or that they do not require a formal education.

Economic progress results in a shift in the nature of labour that favours women's work. This happened in the United States during 1930–50, where expansion of the demand for clerical workers increased the availability of jobs that even respectable women could keep once married. More recently, this has happened not only in China and Mexico, with the rise in factory work suitable for women, but also in India with the rise in service jobs due to outsourcing.

Europeans placed the western paradigm of privately owned male farming systems generating cash crops on the communally held sustenance economies of female farming systems. Land reforms imposed by European authorities often resulted in women losing access to land and being displaced from agriculture. It's also been argued that the introduction of modern technology, cash crops, and wage occupations benefited men rather than women because they were generally only available to men. Women were confined to the rural subsistence sector, where they were forced to use less productive traditional farming practices. Fruits of modernization have primarily benefited men because only men worked in the public sphere while women were confined to the domestic sphere. The cause of women's marginalization is unequal access to new technology, training, and tools: women are not fully integrated into the development process due to restricted access.

Over the decades, there has been a growing concern of women's role in development process. Studies indicate the unequal distribution of economic benefits; with extended resources, the economic share of women in society gets deteriorated because of their less access to overall resources. Similar issue can be seen in research done in Latin America and Asia with regards to the marginalization of women being linked inextricably with inequality in distribution having direct impact on the overall development process.

Men take on new blue-collar jobs, raising family income and reducing women's participation. Furthermore, if males leave agriculture for paid labour and the pace of urbanisation accelerates, there may be fewer family farms or family businesses in which women might work, reducing prospects for women in absolute terms. In arguments regarding female labour force participation throughout

industrialization, the idea that social standards hinder women from accepting blue-collar employment is significant. These rules appear to apply to wives but not to unmarried women, to the extent that they exist. In many nations, it is typical for young unmarried women to work in factories, where they might make up a significant portion of the workforce. Manufacturing enterprises in several countries routinely fire women when they marry, making it doubtful that women's preferences are the main sole explanation.

According to Goldin (in Mamman & Paxson, 2000) society stigmatises the husbands of women who work in blue-collar jobs "only a husband who is lazy, indolent and entirely negligent of his family would allow his wife to do such labor." Why would such a stigma exist? Goldin hypothesizes that this stigma reinforces a "powerful social norm that obliges men to provide for their families" A wife who works in a blue-collar job indicates that her husband is avoiding his responsibilities. White-collar labour is not stigmatised since the women who work there often have better educated (and white-collar) husbands who are competent providers.

In India the demand for skilled and semi-skilled labor force is increasing both in rural and urban areas. There are both negative and positive consequences. One disadvantage is that the employer favours those with the highest educational degree, even if the job does not require that level of education. This truth drives people to study harder while still landing a job that requires fewer talents than they have. In developing countries, the informal sector is unstructured, unregulated, and unregistered, and it is growing. The labor force data do not include jobs in the informal sector. The informal sector emerges as the population grows (both via births and migration) and the formal sector struggles to absorb the labor force, particularly in urban areas. It is a highly competitive industry with no profits.

Workers in the informal sector have little or no formal education, rely on labor-intensive technology rather than capital-intensive technology, are unskilled, and lack easy access to financial capital. If we exclude women who work in agriculture, nine out of ten women in India work in the informal sector. This type of work allows women to balance work and family obligations, and the entire family, including children, can pitch in. Women in India's informal sector have banded together to form the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which was founded in 1972. This organisation provides a platform for women in the informal sector to find full-time work and social security. Among other things, the organisation provides credit, child care, health care, and insurance to women. The South African Self Employed Women's Union, for example, is an example of this type of organization. Women are the main labour supply in the informal sector since the formal sector is mainly dominated by men. Women are particularly vulnerable because the informal sector offers no social protection. Women in the informal sector don't need much or no money to start their production and since their production is labour intense even a small investment have a high marginal rate of return. In households where the head is a woman the children have higher drop-out rates from education since they are more likely to working. The beedis (tobacco rolling) industry in

India employs 5 million workers and an estimated 90 percent of these are women working for US\$ 1/day if they roll 1000 beedis that same day. This work is usually home-based which makes it easier for the women to engage their daughters in the work.

IV. CONTRIBUTION & CHALLENGES OF NAGA WOMEN

Nagas are known as indigenous people comprising of various tribes belonging to Indo-Mongoloid race. The Nagas were and still are a people fond of social and community life. Their traditional culture and tradition is preserved and passed on for generations. Their way of life, livelihood, culture, world view and religion are inextricably intertwined with and dependent on the traditional environment in which they live. The Nagas inhabit a contiguous geographical homeland with a total area of 16,579 Sq Km and the total population is 19,78,502 as per 2011 census. Female population comprises of 9.53 lakhs and male 10.24 lakhs where in the ratio of female to male population stands at 48:52 as per 2011 census.

Nagaland is an agrarian society and majority of the people earn their livelihood through agriculture. The process

of industrialization in the state started only after 1964, industrialization has become an important requisite for modern economic development however it is a very recent phenomena. The slow industrialization can be attributed to various underlying factors such as inadequate infrastructure, remoteness of the state etc but despite the challenges, the economic development has been increasing to a considerable extent by setting up of small scale industries in the state. According to 2011 census, in Nagaland the combined workforce participation rate is 44.7 per cent for females and 53.4 per cent for males. In the state the main female workers (combined) constitute 67.8 per cent of the total main worker population which is higher than the national level percentage of 59.6 per cent while male constitute 80.8 per cent which is slightly lower to the national level of 82.3 per cent.

Majority of Naga women are still engaged in agricultural activities which is evident from table 2 that female cultivators (65.2 %) and agricultural labourers (7.3 %) are more than male cultivators (47.7 %) and agricultural labourers (5.8 %) respectively.

Table 2: Categories of Workers (Combined in %)

Categories	Female	Male
Cultivators	65.2	47.4
Agricultural Labourers	7.3	5.8
Household Industry Workers	3.1	1.7
Other Workers	24.4	45
All Workers	44.7	53.4

Source: Gender Statistics 2022

During the last few years a welcome trend is seen in the growing interest among women to take up income generating activities, self employment and entrepreneurship. This is seen among women in all sections of the society in Nagaland. There is an evidently growing interest in taking up traditional activities such as knitting and handlooms etc, and non-traditional activities such as tours, beauty parlor, entertainment etc. According to Entrepreneur Associates (EA), contribution of women in rural Nagaland boons the farming sector as they are the backbone of the local farming economy.

Besides cultivation, Naga women are also engaged on handicrafts work which is also another source of family income. According to the Annual Administrative Report 2020-2021 of the Department of Economics and Statistics of the Government of Nagaland, Naga Women are primarily engaged in traditional agricultural practices and running micro and small scale enterprises. Self-employment and informal micro entrepreneurship are common among Naga women which contributes towards the growth of state's economy. The recent phenomenon in the state is the formal forms of entrepreneurship. A study shows that the total number of establishments under Naga women ownership by nature of operation accounts for 70.6 per cent in the perennial sector, 22.5 per cent in the seasonal sector and 7 per cent in the casual sector.

Over the years, there has been a steady increase of women employment in organized sectors. During 2005-2006, 18.23 per cent and 35.02 per cent of women were engaged in public and private sector which has increased during 2020-2021 to 23.68 per cent and 55.24 per cent respectively but are still largely lagging behind in public sector. As per Employment Exchange Report 2014, the total registration of women was 36.04 per cent which has increased in the year 2021 to 37.44 per cent. As per Personal Information Management System (PIMS) Report 2014 female employees comprised of only 24.46 per cent of total employees which has increased to 31.26 per cent in 2021.

Women's economic role is undervalued and is often associated with private sphere that are least recognized as a part of economic growth. Even in Naga society, the dual role played by women as agricultural worker and management of household have proved to be challenging towards the contribution in economic development. Overtime, Naga women have shifted beyond their household work but it does not imply that their household burden has been reduced. One of the major barrier is based on the stereotypes roles of women as Naga culture generally portrays women as the caregiver; as such family responsibilities hinders their business growth because of the division of their role between family and business. Due to the deep rooted customary laws and social norms there is a limitation in inheriting land and ownership of immovable assets for which it limits women

entrepreneurs from taking loans from formal financial institutions.

Another concern is the lack of access towards financial resources for women business owners. The data from the 6th Economic Census shows that in India, approximately 79 per cent of women owned businesses were self financed, for the same period Nagaland Data indicates that 93.99 per cent of the women owned enterprises were self financed. The institutions and the infrastructure in the state have not yet evolved to meet women entrepreneurs' needs though the entrepreneurial process is the same for both men and women.

V. CONCLUSION

Despite demonstrating their abilities, women have a tough time translating their human capital into economic empowerment. Wage disparities persist, and women continue to bear a greater share of domestic responsibilities and care.

One of the most difficult challenges in creating long-term economic security for a country is overcoming gender imbalance in the workplace. Although the Nordic countries are the closest to reaching economic parity between men and women, continuing gaps in salary, the digital divide, the cost of care and access to particular occupations suggest that no nation in the world has complete economic equality between men and women. Women dominate sectors connected with duties of care-giving, teaching, counseling and the frontlines of sales and marketing.

The sexual division of labour severely restricts women's productive role outside the home. The global community could achieve sustainable economic development with unbiased system through an inclusive economy. According to an analysis on women, work and wealth, "the financial future is female- and that women are increasingly a market force with the power to shape economic trends worldwide" (Peterson & Powers, 2019).

To ensure inclusiveness in economic sphere of the society and to bring strategic impact towards the economic development of women including unpaid work, programme such as the "Inclusive and Equitable Local Development Programme (IELD)" has been introduced aimed to bring developmental changes in the lives of women (UNDP, 2021). Research suggests that the increased access to facilities that promote economic participation is imperative towards attainment of economic growth of any community. Such access can enhance benefits from political and social freedom to autonomy of choices that one makes thus, the women's role can be further enhanced in economic development with easy access to such economic entitlements.

If the issues involving the hindrances towards women's economic contribution are addressed there can be an impressive progress towards economic benefits; four major obstacles according to McKinsey Global Institute are education level, financial and digital inclusion, legal protection and unpaid care work.

It is estimated that the nations regardless of being developed or developing would have enormous gain when equal economic recognition and participation is achieved. Naga women can emerge as strong economic actors by starting new businesses or growing their existing businesses if they are supported with opportunities, resources and skills to build their market confidence.

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