



Role of women in the Promotion of Peace and Development in Manipur

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Sustainable peace requires the full participation of women at all stages of the peace process ☐ yet they have been largely excluded from efforts to develop and implement fresh, workable solutions to seemingly intractable struggles. Their involvement in these mechanisms, which prevent conflict, stop war, and stabilize regions damaged by warfare, is essential.

Women are often at the centre of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), popular protests, electoral referendums, and other citizen-empowering movements whose influence has grown with the global spread of democracy. Because women frequently outnumber men after conflict, they often drive the on-the-ground implementation of any peace agreement; they therefore have a responsibility to be an integral part of the peace process.

Living and working close to the roots of conflict, they are well positioned to provide essential information about activities leading up to armed conflict and to record events during war, including gathering evidence at scenes of atrocities. Women can thus play a critical role in mobilizing their communities to begin the process of reconciliation and rebuilding once hostilities end.

In Manipur, women's activism is extremely strong. Women are usually in peace building processes due to their own initiative. Even when the state does involve them, it is to be the go between, to play the role of the healer or the pacifier. There has been not effort either on the side



of the state or the non-state agencies to involve women in the actual negotiations. This merely goes to re-emphasise the lack of understanding of peace in terms of mutuality and equality and of viewing the peace process as a kind of settlement.

In Manipur, the role of women in social movement can be traced back to the Pre-British period when Manipur was under monarchical system. But women's movement emerged in an organised manner from the early part of the 20th century. Women's movement in Manipur is norm oriented type and connected with reformations. One women's movement was in 1904, which was popularly known as the first Nupilal (women's war). It was against the unjust British administration. In 1925, a movement was launched by the women against the increase of the water tax rate. In this movement, the main leadership and participation was always from the side of the market women. In 1939, Anisuba Nupi Lal, which translates as the Second Women's War and the chain of events commenced had all the characteristic of a Civil War. The excessive export of rice which culminated in a near famine situation kind let the fire to a population of discontented elements of Feudal and Colonial expression. In fact, much beyond the immediate cause of the movement there was deep rooted historical causes which erupted at the opportune movement of the history. In this paper, an attempt is made to analyse the role of the Manipuri women participation in women's movement for peace building process.

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