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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF MEITEI'S WOMEN.**

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**Abstract**

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**Introduction:-**

Women have been regarded as constituting a weaker section in the society. History has shown that men have always held all the concrete powers. From earliest times, men have deemed it useful to keep woman in a state of dependent. This world has always belonged to men and still retains the form they have imprinted on it. The codes were set up against her and men always are the subject, the absolute, and she is the other. They have often been treated as "second grade citizens" and are considered as a "home makers" who are good in household chores, being confined in the four corners of the walls, rearing the children and can't raise their voice against the male counterparts. Women are treated as inferior especially to men and considering them individuals of the second sex is not fair. When one speaks of women's duties, one should show equal respect to women rights. Providing equal rights, opportunities and statuses to women on par with men is essentially and morally mandatory. Since from her childhood women wings are cut and she is blamed for not knowing how to fly. Traditionally women had four fold status role sequences – as a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law and as a mother.

In every locality Meira Paibis which is also known as "Torch Bearers" started in Manipur in 1977. They are like our mothers who always shouldered the responsibility of defending violations committed by Paramilitary and armed forced units against the innocent people. They are fighting for self determination and political autonomy. Irom Sharmila, a social activists who has fasted for 16 years hunger strike against the AFSPA has shown a good examples of a courageous and determine women. She is known by the peoples as "Iron Lady" of Manipur. Binalakshmi Nepram is also one of the active female activists and a humanitarian for the advocacy of gender rights and women led disarmament. In the last few years she has given herself fully to arrest the gun culture and to bring peace in our state. On the international women's day, 2014, she was voted the top women icon in India and is known by the epithet "the face and voice of north east."

In the case of Meitei society, women played a crucial role since time immemorial though it's a patriarchal society. They are socially aware and economically independent. Whenever there is any conflict or violence in our state, Meitei women always comes forward to bring a solution without any hesitation. There are many instances in the history of Manipur in which Meitei women sacrifice their life to save our state from turmoil.

Ima keithel (women market) also known as khwairamband bazaar in the heart of the Imphal city is one of the biggest and remarkable markets which is run exclusively by women. Not only that they play a tremendous role in the socio political development and have earned a unique distinction for leading a non-violent struggle against the

colonial rule. The two Nupilan i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> Nupilan (1904) and second Nupilan (1939) marked a remarkable history in the socio political development of Manipur. During the Nupilan, women fought against the Britishers and the traders for exporting rice to other states of India. Many women died during the movement and every year we are observing 12Dec as the Nupilan day.

Nisha Bandh and Meira Paibis are the two women movement in curbing social evils in our society. In 1970's Nisha Bandh was established to control the sale of liquor and alcoholism in every locality. Meira Paibis which is also known as "Torch Bearers" started in Manipur in 1977. They are the guardians of civil society who always shouldered the responsibility of defending violations committed by Paramilitary and armed forces units against the innocent people. If there is any protest rally or dharna than Meira Paibis call all the women from their respective houses by beating the electric post. At night women used to patrol in their respective leikais by carrying flaming torches. Irom Sharmila, a social activist who has fasted for 16 years hunger strike against the AFSPA has shown a good example of a courageous and determined woman. She is known by the people as "Iron Lady" of Manipur. Binalakshmi Nepram is also one of the active female activists and a humanitarian for the advocacy of gender rights and women led disarmament. In the last few years she has given herself fully with the objective the goal of arresting gun culture and to bring peace in our state. She has also launched Manipuri Gun Survivor network. On the international women's day, 2014, she was voted the top women icon in India.

The handloom weaving sector is also a primary qualification of a Meitei woman and is apart of domestic duties for women. Every Meitei woman is a weaver by tradition and handloom weaving continues to be a major source of income. It is practically monopolized by women not only from the idea of economic necessity but also from the sense of social custom. There are many Meitei women who got National awards in textile designing from our state. Manipuri women also contributed a lot in the field of games and sports. Kunjarani, MC Kom, Anita Devi and many other sports women has brought laurels for the state in Olympics and commonwealth games. Such Manipuri women give a great contribution in the field of games and sports of Manipur.

The status of the women varies from state to state. Gender stereotyping exist in many society. Though they realise the social evils practices of those stereotyping, they still find hard to break the glass ceiling which is a barrier for the women in their empowerment. In order to fulfil the very goals and objective of sustainable development Goals (SDG) 2030, the government has taken up the initiative to uplift the status of women. Moreover in India, the government has grant benefit in all sphere politically, socially and economically. Thus, it is the duty of the people for the better implementation of the government policies and brings the different sexes into the same pedestal.

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