



## WOMEN AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN MANIPUR

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**Abstract**

*Human Resource Development constitutes both genders; male and female of a country. Man alone cannot take the role of socio-economic development of a country without women. Women are an important ingredient put in the socio-economic development of the country. Nearly half of the world population is constituted by women and women are part and parcel of Human Resource Development. If we have desire to develop then women are to be developed beforehand. But very unfortunately in all societies, women are considered inferior to their male counterparts. In the developed countries, women are somewhat in the growth process attaining the objective of equality and human development. But this is not supported by the experience of the underdeveloped or Third World country. We can look at the historical facts of the women and their role in a society, though it is clear that gender is much neglected, women do play a great role in the past and the present. The international, national and state scenario of women status proved that women are also an important factor of the development of a country and their role is remarkable. Development is incomplete without women's participation and contribution.*

**Keywords:** *Women, Manipuri women, Human Resource Development, Manipur*

**Accountability of Manipuri Women and Their Status in the Society**

The status of Manipuri women is really high in our state. The days of gender discrimination are over and the concept of women participation in the socio-economic and educational perspectives in the new era. Manipuri women survive independently and courageously face challenges of living. "Manipuri Women" – the very term is found to be mentioned in every great incidents of Manipur. The courage of Manipuri women can be reeled off from the stories of the history of Manipur. In the Pre-British period the rulers of Manipuri frequently engaged in wars with neighbouring Burma. While the family males attended the military council, the women took the responsibilities of maintaining the family in all aspects.

The women of Manipur have always played a vital role in the economic life of the state, as a protest against the injustices of the British authority. This was a striking feature of political awakening of Manipuri women. The women of Manipur take a major part in the economic life of the state in which they enjoy maximum independence. This high status accorded to the womenfolk is regarded as one of the greatest prides of Manipur. The First and Second Women's Agitation or Nupi Lan can be reminded here. The First Nupi Lan of 1904 was against the unjust British administration. Because of their high spirited struggle many administrative reforms were then made, and women leaders emerged in Manipur's traditionally female-dominated sphere of business, trade and commerce.

The Second Nupi Lan of 1939 was an impulsive eruption of the suppressed energy of the exploited people. The main cause of the movement was related to the irregularities and malpractices in the administration of the state and economic exploitation by the authority. In the agitation some of the women leaders along with their sympathizers were sent to jail. All the women folk deeply reacted over the matter and stopped market business and the Khwairamband Bazar remained devastated for years. Ultimately they succeeded in bringing reforms in administration. It was a turning point in the emergence of new trend of political and national

consciousness. The courage of Manipuri women is still witnessed with their independent way of living in these modern days too.

Manipuri women though take a crucial role in family's economy; they participate in trade and commerce, taking the major initiation in the market. The 'Khwairamband keithel', the only unique women market on the globe examples the role of Manipuri women in socio-economic life of the state. Khwairamband keithel is the place where women from different parts of Manipur come and share their ideas, socio-economic life. The Khwairamband keithel not only serves as a market place but also a place where women shared their views when the state is under socio-economic turmoil with the negative movement of the political affairs. They play crucial roles exerting their voices against the pessimistic nature of the state affairs and helps in bringing a constructive result for the welfare of the collective of women in bringing peace with socio-economic prosperity in the state.

Manipuri women have become literate and begin to occupy platforms in every aspect of the state development and private companies handling effectively the works assigned to them. Women have become teachers (lecturers), doctors, engineers, lawyers, scientists, police, accountants and many more; occupy a place to exercise their role for the state. In the economic scenario of the state, women take a major position participating in almost all trades. They are engaged in the economic sectors; agriculture and allied sectors, industries and tertiary sectors. The new trend in the participation of women is the emergence of Self-Help-Groups that has gendered under the principal of 'thrift' that the Manipuri women are able to produce substitute goods and become effective in creating economic efficiency of the state by pulling down the rate of import of goods into the state. Though they participate in all the outdoor business of life as economic and social transformers of the state they cannot leave aside the household activities. Now the question is "How can we say that women are inferior to men even when we see their involvement in everyday business of life?"



### Role of Women Vendors of Ema Market

The women vendors of Ema Market are equally found to be active in socio-economic role of the state. In family they manage their household activities and maintain the harmonious relationship among the family members. The women vendors assist in establishing moral values and behaviour among their family members and render financial support in the maintenance of their families. They possess the sense of discipline, regularity and systematic management of their domestic affairs as well as trade and business in the market.

A unique feature of the women in Manipur is that they take the central role in the business of marketing of almost all goods- the products of agriculture, handloom and handicraft. The women in the 'Ema Market' which is also known as Sana Keithel of the capital town is constituted both the women of the town, rural and hilly areas. In the rural areas also there are also markets after the model of Sana Keithel run by the women. It is these women who are coming from different villages of Manipur that represent the mobility of women in the region.

In Manipur, women market occupied a significant place in the history of Manipur where the King conducted the socio-economic and political activities of the state. Even today the women of the market play a very important role in the socio-economic and political activities. These women come out in the time of social and political crises of the state and made protest against government injustices.

Women vendors are playing a vital role in building up a market economy in the organization of Imphal Market System. They have been participating in trade and commercial activities of the market either formal or informal, besides the responsibility to shoulder economic condition at home. Manipur women are front runners and equally valued as their male counterparts on matter of domestic work, social upliftment and indoor economic activities. The Emas are moulders who shape not only the economy of the state but also their children as better human. She is a mother for future strength and future good and thus she need to be educated. When we pour deeper, her roles become wider.

### Contribution in Education

The vendors of Ema Markets also work hard and encourage their children education. They were aware of the benefit and necessity of education in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. They manage their family quite efficiently and also finance the education of their children when their husbands were laying negligent from their responsibilities in bringing up their children. There are many examples of Ema Market's women who made their son I.A.S officers, engineers, doctors and scholars, single-handedly without their husband helping hand. The status of Manipuri women is really high in our state. The days of gender discrimination are over and the concept of women participation in the socio-economic and educational perspectives in the new era. Manipuri women survive independently and courageously face every challenges of living. R.Brown, the political agent of British give description of women vendors as "Many of them(womenfolk) walk in miles

in the morning, buy things from distant villages and sell it in the capital market (SanaKeithel) in the evening. In the evening, the women were hurrying along their wares on their heads and little baby slung on their backs". This statement on Manipuri women of Ema Market gives a beautiful picture of their bravery, hard working and love of their children.

### Women in Social and Political Activities

Women of Manipur took up many vital constructive works. Women of several urban and rural localities organized protest against liquor sale, drinking being a major vice which has affected the lives of a large number of Meitei males. Mature women organized themselves into groups of night patrollers and guard their neighbourhoods against any man consuming liquor, and risking addiction to excessive drinking. Apparently a collective spirit rather than a single individual is the main force behind the women's upsurges. A number of associations known as Meira Paibi and Nisha bandh were formed in several districts of Manipur to liberate people from this dangerous habit of intoxication and using liquor which have been causing immense harm to the people and society. The women started giving illustrations from the lives of a number of persons who had lost their property, health and morality and gradually had marched towards death in an early age due to such habits of using liquor.

Some of the important women's associations in Manipur are All Manipur Women's Social Reformation and Development Samaj, All Manipur Rural Women's Welfare and Upliftment Association and Manipuri Women's Society. They try to find out the evils of the society and attempt to safeguard the women's community and also promote welfare of the women folk as a whole.

Manipuri women are not left behind on the place of political status. Women began to occupy the place in the State Legislative Assembly and find a place to show their capability in politics. Smt. Apabi Devi(l) Hangmila Shazia, Smt W. Leima Devi, Miss Kim Gangte, Smt A.K. Mirabai Devi and Smt. O Landhoni Devi at present like men have entered as legislatures. In the field of sports, arts and cultures too, Manipuri women has brought fames.

### Women in Arts and Culture

Art and culture of Manipur is famous all over the world. Women take vital role in enhancing the culture of Manipur. Costumes of Manipuri women varied with different occasions reflecting cultural heritage of the state. Women participate equally with men in traditional as well as cultural activities. The status of women artists in the society has improved to a great extent during the last three decades. Various courses of certificates, diplomas and degrees have been introduced in the institutions of Manipuri dance and music and they are well recognized by the Universities and Government inside and outside the state. These helped the women artists in making a career of their own as well as job opportunities inside and outside the state.. lai Haraoba dances, Naga Dances, Rasa Leelas, etc. Which were usually performed in the open gatherings for longer durations of several hours have been composed



specially for short durations as stage performances. During the recent years the educated women artists from Manipur have been able to introduce the age old traditional Manipur art of dance and music not only to the other states of India but to foreign countries as well. Thus, the development of women education in the state had a great impact on the popularization of the traditional Manipur arts of dances, music, drama etc. which subsequently played an important role in the social development of Manipur.

### Women in Literature

Manipuri women also played an important role in the developing of Manipuri literature with the emergence of various appearance of women writers of profound influence, Thoibi Devi (1920-96), Khaidem Pramodini (1928-) and Maharajkumari Binodini (1922-2011). Thoibi Devi's novels portray women of almost perfect personality, mixed with traditional values and the educated, rational view point, the women who could object to the social norms and dare to go their ways. Binodini's novels and short stories are full of sobriety mixed with hilarity, which could charm the readers. She also portrays women who could break the social, religious and class barriers, to handle the unpredictable with an unusually independent mind. Pramodini took interest in the social conditions of women. She could not bear the pulse of the weak women; she gave a message to oppressed womenfolk to rise and lead a respectable life. These writes in one way or the other, encouraged other women writers to show their talents, which resulted in the appearance of women writers and poets of substance. Many women writers or poets of the new age come up with their different views according to their experiences, or look into the inner and outer world of women's lives. Literature, as an important social force has been playing a significant role in bringing about changes in the society. It brings changes in the values, attitudes, ideas, customs, rituals and ways of life of the people. Thus, growth of literature played a great role in the social development of the state.

### Women in Journalism

The women of Manipur also took initiative in developing Manipuri journalism. For example, in 1969 one Manipuri journal known as Yaipha Yumbalda Nupi (role of women in family planning) was published. One monthly journal called Macha Leima continued its regular publication and the sole responsibility of its publication was taken by an association called Chanura Marup. All writers and editors of this journal are women and all articles are directly or indirectly related to the affairs of women. The family planning association, Manipur and the Mahila Kalyan Samiti published souvenirs and many social issues in relation to the International women year. It can be proudly said that such a publication specially meant for women began a new era in the journalism of Manipur. So, not only men but women also played great roles in developing journalism in Manipur.

### Women in Games and Sports

Women have come up in the field of games and sports in Manipur. The heroic performance of many Manipuri women

in the field of games and sports has kept the name of Manipur in the news of the world. In a number of games and sports events Manipuri women are taking the lead. In football, the majority of players of India are from Manipur. In hockey, cycling, boxing, weightlifting, Manipuri women have reigned in the world of Indian sports and games. Both Surjalata and Tingongleima were captains of the Indian Women's Hockey team. But in Olympics, the female weightlifters have brought fame to Manipur. In the Athens Olympics 2004 two Manipuri women represented India. Kunjarani was in the 46 kg group and Sanamacha Chanu was in the 52 kg group. Kunjarani came out 4<sup>th</sup> in the Olympics games. Mary Kom is the indomitable women pugilist of Manipur. She won bronze medal in the 2012 London Olympic Games. In recognition of Mary Kom's achievements the government of India awarded her the Arjuna Award and the Padma Shri Award. M.C. Mary Kom has established herself as the most successful women boxer of all time. Manipuri women have played important roles in society. In the family and the society their role is distinctively fundamental. That is why they are given a pride of place in social functions. Indeed, they are at the centre of the family. Manipuri women have been brave and hard working.

### Conclusion

The improvement of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world. In today's rapidly changing society of the world, women must have understood their rights and responsibilities. Education holds the key as a weapon to break the silence of a number of suffering women and make them visible as a strong social force in the society. It needs tremendous force to break the silence of these women who has been living in the darkness of negative self image and lack of self confidence. It is only through education and employment that women will provide a higher multiplier of Human Resource Development. Hence, women need to be educated and when they got the light of education they will develop themselves and thus the development of the state. Education will enable these women to develop their skill, become more productive and reduce their dependency and enhance their status in the society and in the family.

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